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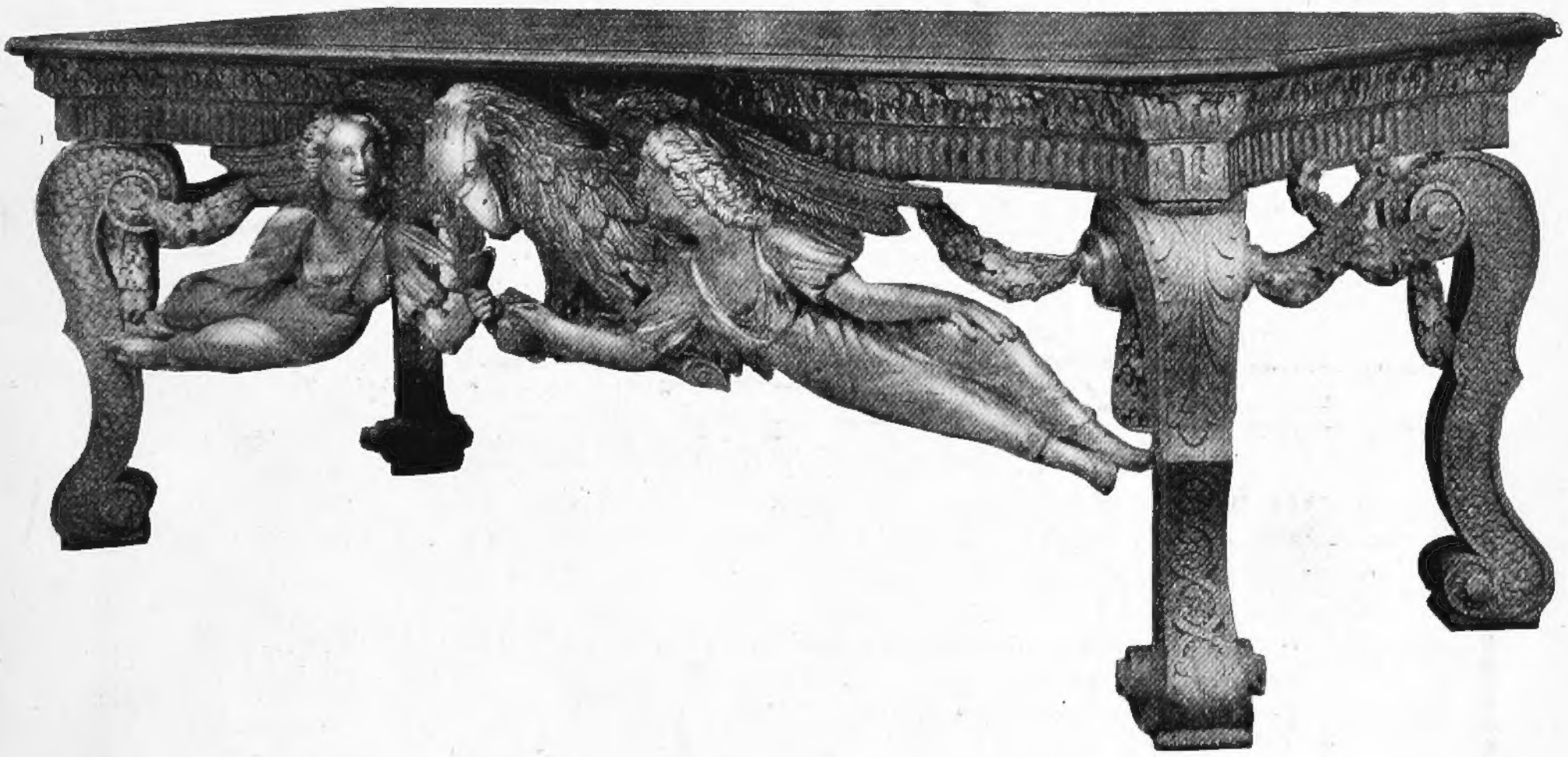

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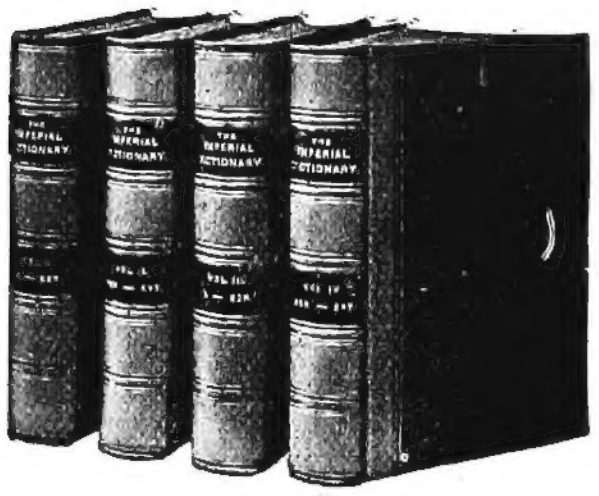

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THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
AUGUST 1909

MODERN POETRY

Daily Bread

By Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

PERSONS: ISAAC OXLEY, ADAH ROBSON.

SCENE: *A garret in the slums, furnished only with a bed. It is nearly midnight; but* ADAH ROBSON, *with hat and jacket on, and an old carpet-bag by her side, sits on an empty box by the window, in the light reflected from the lamp in the court below. Presently, a step is heard on the stairs; the door opens, and* ISAAC OXLEY *enters.*

ISAAC. You . . . Adah . . . here!
ADAH. Yes, Isaac, lad, I've come.
ISAAC. Come? Adah . . . come?
But, how've you come so far?
ADAH. Much of the way I walked;
And only took the train,
When I could trail no further.
ISAAC. 'Twas a long way for you to come alone.
And how, lass, did you find me—
You, who had never seen a bigger town
Than Morton, with its one long, straggling street?
ADAH. I had the letter with me that you wrote,
So long ago:
And folk were good to me:
And when I was dumfounded by the noise;
And by the throngs of people,
That, like a never-ending flock of sheep,

Met, in a narrow lane,
Daft with the yapping of the dogs,
Scurried and jostled round me,
Some one would pity my bewilderment,
And put me on my way;
Though many that I asked
Had never even heard of Barker's Court.
But all of them were kind;
And did their best to help me.

ISAAC. How long have you been here?

ADAH. Close on three hours.

ISAAC. So long?

ADAH. I could have cried—
I was so wearied;
And, after all,
When I got here to find you out!

ISAAC. I'm sorry, lass!
If I'd but known . . .

ADAH. The neighbours could not tell me where you were;
But thought that night
Would bring you home.

ISAAC. Home, lass!
'Tis well that you won hither,
Safe through the streets.
Were you not frightened, Adah?

ADAH. Though sore bewildered,
I was not afraid.
The folk were kind.

ISAAC. Aye; folk are kind enough,
As far as words go;
And are always willing
To squander breath on strangers;
For city-folk are not like hill-folk, Adah.
But, why did you leave home?

ADAH. To come to you.
But, you're not pleased to see me.

ISAAC. Yes, lass! you know . . . but . .

ADAH. Mother died, last week;
And I had no one else to turn to.
And, Isaac, when you went away,
You said you'd come again for me;
And that is nigh a year since.
I waited for you;

Yet, you never came;
And, when my mother died,
I had no home;
And so, I thought . . .
But, maybe, I did wrong
To come to you like this.
But you . . .
You said . . .
And yet, you did not come;
And only wrote one letter.
Why did you never come for me?
You said you would,
When you had found . . .
ISAAC. When I had found a home for you.
But, I have found no home.
ADAH. Yet, this . . .
ISAAC. This is no home for you—
This empty garret.
ADAH. 'Tis bare . . .
Still, we soon . . .
ISAAC. We soon!
Nay! you shall not stay here:
You must go back again.
ADAH. Go back?
ISAAC. You must go home.
ADAH. I have no home . . .
I thought . . .
But, I did wrong to come.
Forgive me, Isaac . . . yet . . .
ISAAC. O Adah, lass! there's nothing to forgive;
But you can never live here—
Here, in this reeking hell.
And I—
How could I bear to see you starve . . .
ADAH. To see me starve!
Why should I starve?
For I am strong;
And I can work.
ISAAC. When I came to the city first,
I, too, was strong;
And I could work;
And yet,
I starve.

ADAH. Starve, Isaac!
Oh, but you are thin and worn!
While you were standing in the dark,
I did not see:
But, now the light falls on you,
You looked famished.
Are you not working, Isaac?
Are you ill?
Too ill to work?
ISAAC. Nay, Adah, I'm not ill,
Save for want of work.
ADAH. A man like you,
Who used to work . . .
ISAAC. Aye, lass, while there was work for me.
You know how hard I toiled at home,
Until my father died,
And Stephen married;
And there was room for me no longer;
And not a cottage in the country-side,
That I could get,
For love or money,
To make a home
For you and me.
And I was forced to turn my back
On all familiar things,
On all that I'd grown up with,
And all that had not changed
Since first I blinked in daylight:
To leave my friends
And go out int' the world
To seek my fortune among strangers—
A stranger among strangers—
To seek my fortune!
ADAH. And have you not found . . .?
ISAAC. My fortune?
Aye! here is my fortune, lass—
This empty garret,
In the mouth of hell!
ADAH. Yet, when you left,
You were so full of hope;
And said that in the City
There would be work enough;
Aye! and a home for us.

ISAAC. Yes, I was hopeful,
For I was strong,
And full of meat;
And did not know in cities strong men starve—
Starve, in the midst of plenty,
And wander homeless,
In a maze of houses.
ADAH. But, wherefor . . .?
ISAAC. Because there is no work for them.
"If a man toil not, neither shall he eat."
'Tis a just law, I thought,
While I could labour,
And eat my fill.
But when there was no work for me,
And I saw many, who had never toiled,
Rich, and full-fed, and happy,
While old men starved,
Things seemed quite different.
You know that life's not easy,
For us poor country-folk, at any time;
Still, at the worst,
Up ere the dawn, and labouring till dark,
We, somehow, scrape along on hard-won earnings.
For, while there's work, there's hope:
But, when work fails . . .
ADAH. And, have you had no work
Since you left home?
ISAAC. Nay, none that I call work.
ADAH. How have you lived then?
ISAAC. You know, I'd saved a pound or two
Towards our home. . . .
ADAH. But that would never last . . .
ISAAC. Nay, 'twas soon gone,
Though I spent sparingly enough, God knows.
I should have died, without it.
'Tis hungry, tramping through the streets all day,
From works to works;
And standing in the throng
Outside the factory gates,
Still hoping against hope that, when they open,
I, too, may be allowed to slip inside.
But times are hard,
And when the gates swing to

I ever find myself among the crowd,
Shut out from work and bread.
ADAH. How have you lived?
ISAAC. Why, lass, I hardly know—
An odd job here and there,
Enough to put a copper in my pocket;
Still, never fit work for a man like me.
These hands, lass, were not made
To open carriage-doors—
These arms, to carry papers—
And this big, hulking body,
To scramble in the gutter
With starveling boys for life!
ADAH. Nay, surely!
ISAAC. O Adah, you must go away from here—
For here men starve;
Yea, men and women starve:
And starving folk are ill to live with.
Such sights I've seen!
I did not think that hell could hold such sights.
But here, where hundreds starve,
And wander shelterless, at night,
Or sleep beneath dark arches,
Or on cold benches, wrapped in soaking fog,
Here . . . here is hell!
Go . . . go . . . before . . .
ADAH. O Isaac, you are ill!
ISAAC. Nay, I'm not ill.
ADAH. Yet you seem faint.
ISAAC. Naught ails me . . . save starvation.
One cannot trudge all day
Without a bite . . .
ADAH. Oh, you are famished!
And I'm hungry, too—
For I've had little since I left.
I thought to find you sooner;
And then, together . . .
ISAAC. You are hungry, Adah!
And I have naught to offer,
Not a crust.
The cupboard is quite empty,
As empty as my pocket.
I have not earned a copper all day long.

ADAH. I have some money, Isaac.
Though not much :
Still, a few shillings.
There was little left
When mother died.
Yet, while there is a penny,
Why should we sit and hunger ?
I'll go and buy some food,
If there's a bite to get at such an hour.
ISAAC. Yes, there is always food to get—
For money.
ADAH. Then I will go . . .
ISAAC. Nay ! you shall not go down
Into that hell at such a time of night.
I'll get the food.
ADAH. But you're too weak.
ISAAC. Nay, I am strong enough . . .
It is not far.
ADAH. Then take the purse.
ISAAC. Nay, lass; 'tis safer here;
And sixpence is enough to buy a feast.
'Tis long since I've had silver in my hand.
Would God, that I had earned it !
I do not like to take your money. . . .
ADAH. O Isaac, I am famished !
ISAAC. I'll not be long.

[*He goes out, and is heard hurrying down the stairs.* ADAH *takes off her hat and jacket, and unpacks her bag, laying her scanty stock of clothes, and other belongings, on the bed; then, unfolding a parcel, she takes out a cheap tin clock, winds it up, and sets it on the mantelpiece, where it ticks loudly in the vacant silence. After a while,* ISAAC *returns, carrying a basin of coffee and a chunk of bread, which he lays on the box beside* ADAH.

ADAH. So quickly !
ISAAC. 'Twas not far;
And I came back as quickly as I could,
Lest it should get too cold,
And filled with fog.
Come, take a drink,
While there's some heat in it.
'Twill do you good.

ADAH. Nay, you drink first.
You need it more than I.
ISAAC. Nay, lass; 'tis yours.
And I—I have no cup.
I paid a penny for the basin;
But they will make that good again,
When I return it.
ADAH. You'd not take it back—
The first thing that you've bought to set up house with!
If you've no cup,
Can we not drink together, from the basin,
As man and wife,
In their own home?
We are not strangers.
ISAAC. Set up house . . .
As man and wife . . .
Together . . .
In their home . . .
Nay, lass!
That cannot be.
You shall not starve for my sake.
Oh, had you seen the faces round the stall—
The hungry faces, in the flare
Of naphtha, and the eyes
That glared out from the shadows greedily;
And, as I passed them with the coffee,
The cold, blue lips that drank up the rich steam
As though they feasted . . .
ADAH. And you'd naught for them!
ISAAC. To one poor girl, I gave
A penny of your money:
A child almost she seemed;
But she was naught but skin and bone and rags—
And, oh, such eyes!
I little thought I'd live to see
That look in any girl's eyes.
But when the body starves,
The best of us are weak;
And there's small blame
To such as she.
ADAH. Come, drink your coffee, lad.
'Tis long since we have supped together.
ISAAC. A merry meeting this!

Hark !
What is that ?
A clock !
Where did it come from ?
ADAH. Don't you know it, Isaac ?
I brought it with me.
'Tis my very own.
They could not take it from me ;
I'd paid for it at Morton Fair
With my own money.
And, while you were gone,
I took it from my bag,
And wound it up.
Things seemed more homelike
When I heard it ticking.
ISAAC. Homelike . . .
Aye, Adah, there's a kind of comfort
In listening to the ticking of a clock.
That coffee's made another man of me.
This garret never seemed like home before ;
Yet since you came, somehow . . .
But you must go, to-morrow.
ADAH. Go . . . Isaac . . . where ?
ISAAC. I do not know.
I only know,
If you stay here,
You'll starve.
ADAH. And if I go,
I'll starve.
Why should we starve apart ?
But we'll not starve, lad,
If we stick together.
We'll win through, somehow.
Though there's nought for you,
There may be work for me ;
And I am strong :
And better times will come,
And bring you work.
ISAAC. In vain,
I've trudged the streets
All day. . . .
ADAH. But, that day's gone ;
And has not even it brought something to you ?

ISAAC. Aye; Though it's been a black and bitter day,
The ending's brave.
If there were no to-morrow. . . .
ADAH. We know not what to-morrow brings.
ISAAC. To-morrow!
O lass, have I not said
Unto my heart, each night,
To-morrow will bring work?
And yet, to-morrow
Comes ever empty-handed.
ADAH. Nay! Surely, Isaac!
Yesterday, your garret
Was bare, save for the bed and this old box.
Now, have you not a clock and basin
To start housekeeping with?
ISAAC. And you!
ADAH. If you will let me stay. . . .
ISAAC. If I will let you . . . let you . . .
O lass, I cannot let you go again!
Though we should starve . . .
ADAH. We shall not starve;
But live and work together. [*The clock strikes.*]
ISAAC. 'Tis a brave clock.
ADAH. What! three, already!
And to-morrow comes;
The day is not far off,
Though it is dark.
ISAAC. Aye, lass;
And now, at home the village cocks
Will all be stretching their long necks, and crowing.

Three Poems

By Gerald Cumberland

SONG

A fool am I, for money slips
  Between my fingers ere the gold
Has time to traffic with my dreams,
  And litter actions manifold.

My silver cup has wide smooth lips,
  And loves to have a deep carouse ;
He winks the firelight in my eyes,
  And pours contempt on empty vows.

Oh warm to body, cool to throat,
  And fragrant to the lips is gay
And jolly Beaune, that sings a tune
  To stories of old Rabelais.

A fool am I, for wine is waste,
  And what the Wise say I know well :
That he who spends his days in song
  Will pass Eternity in Hell.

Whene'er I hold within my palms
  A kingdom or a world of bliss,
The golden darlings melt between
  My cup-shaped hands' interstices.

Full many a sovereign have I thrown
  Into the vats of Southern France,
And all my golden guineas fall
  Into the laps of Song and Dance ;

And lean, long faces look at me,
  And prophesy an evil doom ;
But when my day of reckoning comes,
  I'll lay safe housed within my tomb,

Knowing full well the sprite of me,
  Nourished by all my body's boon,
Is great and generous company
  For pale ghosts shiv'ring neath the moon.

MARE MALIGNUM

He lay upon wet sand, and unto him
Came hurrying the wavelets, long and slim.

He smelt their odour, and his shining breast
Received their kisses as they, falling, prest

Their hundred mouths against his flesh and died,
Articulate with music, at his side.

His body ached to feel the plunge and throw
Of deep waves tearing at the sand below,

And crushing him in proud abandonment
Until their passion and their rage were spent ;

When the tired sun crept to his crimson bed,
He lay embraced by little waves, all red

With fire that flamed upon his body bare
And rose, expiring, in the heavy air.

Cold waves of leaden hue now fall on him
Whose body is so white, and long and slim ;

Long-fingered weeds, which the black sea has made
Lie on his face, and his pale mouth invade.

And in his open palm there lies a shell,
White, pure and meek—the ocean's asphodel.

JOAN

My baby's hands wave in the air
As if they had great business there.
They say her innocent big eyes
Can never lighten with surprise,

Can never drift o'er passing faces
Or anchor on a field of daisies;
Her soul can never drownéd be
In the green splendours of the sea.
The spacious chambers of her mind
Empty must be of all her kind,
And all the corridors and ways
Must be unopened all her days.

I do not think that Paradise
Will shut its gates on her blind eyes;
And while they tread the earth, her feet
Will pass along some heavenly street.
The wind will carry to her ears
Sweet music from the unseen spheres;
Her mother's kiss, so soft and mild,
Will be a greeting from some child
Who innocently plays close by
The shining throne of the Most High.
And when the rain of Summer falls,
'Twill be as though she hears the calls,
And feels the tears, of Cherubim
And wingéd smiling Seraphim,
Who "Holy, holy, holy!" cry
In that far place they call the sky.

Tiberius

By Norman Douglas

BROAD-SHOULDERED, stooping, and tall above the common measure, slow in his movements and speech, with great glittering eyes and hair falling over the nape of his neck, wrapped in a ceremonious and almost awkward reserve—such is the external impression we gain of him. And if, forgetting awhile his character as ruler of the world, we survey him in private life, we soon discover what manner of man he was—a specimen of what the French call *La vieille roche.* Courteous and formal, a strenuous cultivator of the "grand manner," a conservative in speech, detesting all slipshod expressions, slang and Gallicisms (Hellenisms); economical, conscientious, methodical; a scorner of luxury and dissipation and an outspoken enemy of the irregularities of fashionable married life; this old man—for he was old before he became emperor—possessed many of the virtues which, if we are to believe our grandfathers, were far commoner in their days than in ours. Of course his frugality was interpeted as avarice, while a certain invincible shyness, peculiar to many great men, was put down to pride—that celebrated pride of the Claudian house, whose true significance, like that of the democratic Gracchi, it has taken the world twenty centuries to understand. The younger generation of his day hardly appreciated traits like that recorded of him when, one day, only half a boar being served up at table—the other half having been eaten previously—he observed to the embarrassed company that "the half boar has just the same taste as the whole." A particularly fine fish was brought to him; he sent it out to be sold, remarking that some rich fellow like Apicius or Octavius would be sure to buy it. He was right; after some bidding, it fell to Octavius for 5000 sesterces. The profligate youngster Caligula, we are told, was kept very strictly "under the simple and wholesome mode of life" of Tiberius on Capri; whenever he went out for a spree, he disguised himself in a wig and muffler so as to escape unobserved. . . .

Of the military genius of Tiberius, his political sagacity, his

assiduity in work: of his wonderful ability for finance and administration, there has never been a question. If the Roman world was able to withstand the shocks of the madmen who succeeded him on the throne, it was due to the stability and prosperity in which he left it. And wherein lies the secret of his intellectual superiority and successes? In this, I think: that he had a conspicuous preference for the able and honest common man. He knew the rottenness of the aristocrats of his day and treated them accordingly. "He was always unwilling to admit them to authority, and it is unquestionably true that, taking them as a class, they were during his long and prosperous reign, treated with unusual disrespect. . . . Although he evinced the greatest anxiety to surround the throne with men of ability, he cared little for those conventional distinctions by which the minds of ordinary sovereigns are greatly moved. He made no account of dignity of rank, he did not even care for purity of blood. He valued men neither for the splendour of their pedigrees, nor for the grandeur of their titles. . . . His large and powerful intellect, cultivated to its highest point by reflection and study, taught him the true measure of affairs and enabled him to see that to make a government flourish, its councillors must be men of ability and virtue; but that if these two conditions are fulfilled, the nobles may be left to repose in the enjoyment of their leisure, unoppressed by those cares for the state for which, with a few brilliant exceptions, they are naturally disqualified by the number of their prejudices and by the frivolity of their pursuits."

Is not this an exceedingly truthful account of the aims and methods of Tiberius? Yet it is extracted out of no biography of that emperor; convert the "he" into "she," and the words will be found in Buckle's description of Queen Elizabeth.

Both sovereigns correctly judged that the nobles of their time had played their part—idle, intriguing and discontented, they were now merely a menace to the peace of the empire. Among the self-made men whom the Roman emperor drew to his court was the senator Lucilius Longus, who clung to Tiberius "in good and evil days" and whose death, we are told, afflicted him as much as that of his only son. Another was the knight Curtius Rufus. To those who reminded Tiberius of this man's lack of pedigree, he was wont to reply: "Rufus, it seems to me, is his own ancestor." The minister Sejanus was also one of those *new men*, as the Romans disparagingly called some of the ablest of their time. The persons who witnessed the testament of Tiberius were "quite ordinary people." He married his grand-

daughter to a man whose grandfather, Tacitus regrets to say, "everybody had known as a common knight in Tibur." Like Elizabeth, too, he had little respect for the Senate. Their undignified flunkeyism made him sick. "O, generation fit for slavery!" he exclaimed to them. And simultaneously he detested—an ancestral trait and one that he possessed in common with refined persons of all ages—the grossness of the proletariat. He never encouraged their cravings for gladiatorial shows. He gave few games. That sufficed to damn him in their eyes and to make them forget all he had done for the maintenance of public order, and all his munificence towards them in moments of public distress. "Into the Tiber with Tiberius!" may well have been sincere, for the common herd of ancient Rome was the same ignoble beast, governed only by its appetites, and as incapable of any generous or even consecutive thought, as that of our day.

The events of his life, a series of sharp disappointments, brought out more clearly, with increasing age, the characteristic of the Claudian house: cynical aloofness. Embittered in his family and marital relations, thwarted by the intelligent democrat (Sejanus) in whom he had placed his confidence, he felt all the loneliness of his position.

But he felt also—his power.

Modern Europe, grown wise with age, has muzzled its sovereigns. Thus has arisen a race of constitutional marionettes, whose chief occupation—to judge by the newspapers, at least—consists in "swopping" uniforms, rushing about the continent in special trains, and hanging blue ribbons round each other's necks. This is all as it should be, and it is well to remember that the muzzling has been done by the class of men whom Tiberius respected and sought to bring to honour. It is also well, now and then, to ask ourselves this question: how many of those who now "govern" Europe would display the magnanimity of Tiberius if they possessed a tithe of his power—how many would follow his example in refusing all external honours, or exercise his clemency towards religious dissentients, caricaturists and political adversaries? The mind shudders to think of the pandemonium that would break loose if these were allowed, only for a day, the freedom of Tiberius. On that day there would be more prosecutions for *lèse majesté* in Germany than in the immense Roman world under the whole reign of Tiberius; Austria and Russia would be aflame with the fires of *auto-da-fés*. There is recorded, on this last matter of religious persecution, a remark illustrating the fundamental sanity of Tiberius which cannot be too often repeated. A man was about to be put on his trial

for insulting the divinity of the deceased Augustus, but the emperor stopped the proceedings by saying that "gods could avenge their own wrongs": *deorum iniurias deis auras*—a genial, golden pronouncement, which deserves to be graven over the portals of every church on earth.

The fact is, he had learnt worldly wisdom where our present rulers can never hope to learn it—in the rough school of life. And he had the courage of his convictions. How many men and women of to-day, the slaves of contradictory conventionalities, might take to heart that saying of his: "Let them hate me, so long as they approve my actions." This is monumental. We may place it beside that sentence which Stahr, with great propriety, has cited at the end of his volume on Tiberius, and which shows his real feelings in regard to public opinion. After repeating the words of Tacitus to the effect that "it was not so much that he cared to gratify the present generation, as that he was desirous of standing well with posterity," Stahr quotes the final passage from a speech in which Tiberius deprecates the erection of a temple to himself and his mother: "For myself, conscript fathers, I am a mortal man, I am confined to the functions of human nature; and if I well supply the principal place amongst you, it suffices me, I solemnly assure you; and I would have posterity remember it. They will render enough to my memory, if they believe me to have been worthy of my ancestors; watchful of your interests; unmoved in perils and, in defence of the public weal, fearless of private enmities. These are the temples I would raise in your breasts; these are the fairest effigies and such as will endure. As for those of stone, if the judgment of posterity changes from favour to dislike, they are despised as no better than sepulchres. Hence it is I here invoke the gods, that to the end of my life they should grant me a spirit undisturbed and discerning in duties human and divine: and hence, too, I implore our citizens and allies that, whenever my dissolution comes, they should celebrate my actions and the odour of my name with praises and benevolent testimonies of remembrance." "And thenceforward," Tacitus adds—I cannot resist quoting this characteristic touch:—"thenceforward he persevered in slighting upon all occasions, and even in private conversation, this worship of himself; a conduct which was by some ascribed to modesty; by many to distrust of his merit; by others to degeneracy of spirit"—and by none, it seems (certainly not by Tacitus) to its most natural cause, common sense.

Common sense—that is the mark of Tiberius, and no wonder it was a feature offensive, almost unintelligible to dreamers who

yearned for things that are not, for things to come or things that have been. A destructive flood had overswept some district of the empire, and there was a general outcry that the goblins overhead must be appeased and the Sibylline Books consulted with that object. Tiberius thought it more profitable to appoint a parliamentary commission to inquire into the causes of the disaster and report upon the measures to be taken in avoiding it in future. Sober talk like this will never win a crowd. Towards the end of his life, he allowed Senate and nobles, both equally worthless and effete, to seize each other by the throat; anticipating, probably, that the most impulsive and incapable on both sides would be the first to succumb, leaving the men of moderation to survive. A rugged method, perhaps; yet a cynical and civilised modern aristocrat, like the late Lord Salisbury, would have acted in precisely the same manner. Brutality and common sense are not rarely different names for the same thing. There are men who call surgeons brutal, because they amputate limbs.

But this firm grasp of general principles never degenerated with Tiberius into coldness. On the contrary, there ran through his nature an opposing current, a strong vein of kindliness and consideration for others which alone can explain many of the enigmas, as they are called, of his life. He was capable both of feeling, and of inspiring in others, deep attachment. He might even be called an idealist in the sense that he seems to have expected more of the world than he found it could, or would, perform; and as such, his sufferings at the blows of fortune were proportionately the more intense. For the calculating individual changes little during life; from the cradle to the grave he pursues the even and not always lovely tenour of his way: the man of heart, as we say, has only to live long enough in order to become something of a cynic. And Tiberius lived to the age of seventy-eight. Of his kindliness many instances are on record. Such was that little incident at Rhodes. "One morning, in settling the course of his daily excursion, he happened to say that he should visit all the sick people in the town. This being not rightly understood by those about him, the sick were brought into a public portico, and ranged in order, according to their several distempers. Being extremely embarrassed by this unexpected occurrence, he was for some time irresolute how he should act; but at last determined to go round them all, and make an apology for the mistake even to the meanest amongst them, and such as were entirely unknown to him." By what an accident of history has this charming episode been preserved!

When his brother, whom he loved sincerely, died, Tiberius accompanied the funeral *cortège* on foot, all the way from the forests of Germany to Rome. Paterculus, speaking from personal experience, has recorded how thoughtful he was, during his campaigns, for the health and comfort of his troops. When any officer was ill Tiberius saw that everything was done for his well-being and recovery; "for all, who required it, a carriage was in waiting; the use of his sedan-chair was free to all, and I myself, among others, have profited by it." When at last his dissolute second wife Julia, the cause of endless trouble and pain to Tiberius, had been divorced from him by decree of her father Augustus, he "interposed by frequent letters to Augustus on her behalf, that he would allow her to retain the presents he had made her, notwithstanding the little regard she merited from him." His affection for his first wife Vipsania, whom Augustus obliged him to divorce for political reasons "not without great anguish of mind," is recorded by various ancient writers. A chance meeting of the two that took place after this event is thus described: "At divorcing Vipsania he felt the deepest regret, and upon meeting her afterwards, he looked after her with eyes so passionately expressive of affection, that care was taken she should never again come in his sight." Observe, now, how so simple and natural a story can be misconstrued. After referring to this passage, Beulé says: "Peu de mots peignent beaucoup de choses: ce ne sont point des larmes qui jaillissent des yeux de Tibère â la vue de la compagne de sa jeunesse; il n'éprouve ni douleur ni regret; ses yeux s'enflent, se tendent, s'enflamment. Les sens parlent donc seuls, c'est le cheval qui hennit devant une belle cavale." Truly, the "dernier mot" of Beulé's *odium republicanum*.

But though such flagrant misrepresentations are scarce, there are various passages where a misinterpretation of some authority, now lost, has led to far more serious errors. Here is an interesting example from the classics which I do not remember having seen recorded among the thirty odd monographs on Tiberius that have come under my notice. On the one hand, we have the careful tables drawn up by Sievers, Freytag and others, analysing the criminal cases under his reign, from which it can be seen how frequently he intervened to mitigate the sentence of the condemned. We have even the testimony of Tacitus, who records a senator saying: "I have often heard our prince (Tiberius) bewail the event, when, by suicide, a criminal has prevented the exercise of his mercy." On the other hand, we are told that the emperor was so blood-thirsty, that he lamented whenever a criminal "escaped" him by killing himself. "For he thought

death so slight a punishment," says Suetonius, "that upon hearing that Carnulius, one of the accused who was under prosecution, had killed himself, he exclaimed: "Carnulius has escaped me!" The accounts both of Suetonius and of Tacitus may well have been drawn from the same original source. Now: this preventing—this escaping: what shall we make of it? Does the suicide escape his cruelty, or his clemency? We may decide for the latter version by throwing into the balance the fine trait recorded of him to the effect that, although slow in his usual speech and almost wrestling, as it were, with the utterance of his words, "his language flowed freely and rapidly whenever he had occasion to succour (*quotiens subveniret*)."

Can anything definite as to the character of Tiberius be read out of his busts? I think not. I think we are not yet in a position to deduce a single mental quality from the features of any human being, alive or in effigy. Grossly asymmetrical lines will, of course, suggest a flawed physical structure and consequent disharmony of mind; but phrenology, the theory of Gall, and physiognomy, as expounded by Lavater and his disciples, are still on a plane with astrology; the modern historian or—critic, who builds a hypothesis of character upon the evidence furnished by such vague speculations, is no less of a quack than Nostradamus. Like many inexact arts, to be sure, these tend to become more scientific every day; various currents are converging in that direction; but nothing exemplifies better the worthlessness of present-day authority in these matters than the conflicting characteristics which writers, according to their several passions or prepossessions, succeed in discovering in the busts of the Roman Cæsars. When one remembers with what slavish fidelity the artists of ancient Rome reproduced the original features in these works, it would stand to reason that the character to be read out of any single one of them would be constant. Yet it is no exaggeration to say that a portrait of one of the Cæsars is capable of as many interpretations as a contested passage in Holy Scripture. There is no vice, and there is no virtue, that has not been plainly read out of the busts of Tiberius. His mouth, according to one writer, betrays "indecision"; another discovers that "about the delicate mouth plays a smile of superiority"; a third writes: "probably at no time has nature formed such a perfect diplomatic mouth. Firmly closed, it illustrates Talleyrand's saying that speech was given us to conceal our thought," while a fourth shudders at "the horrible grimace, which one cannot drive from one's remembrance." And so on, with every other item of the face.

In regard to the bust as a whole, a similar uncertainty prevails. In the Paris sardonyx cameo, Beulé recognises, admirably portrayed, all the vicious qualities that form his idea of Tiberius: "la bouche, la menton, sont gras, sensuels, épais, et tournent au type de Vitellius. Le cou est énorme, enflé par le vin, la bonne chère, et comme par un venin secret, &c. &c." According to Bernouilli, there is no reason for supposing this cameo to represent Tiberius at all! The "veiled head" sold to the British Museum by Castellani is rejected by some of the best authorities as not representing Tiberius, while many persons consider it one of his most lifelike busts. As in most of them, the nose, the telling feature of the face, has been restored, and in the present instance by an unusually inferior artist, so as to change its whole expression. The nose of Tiberius was probably moulded after the aquiline pattern of his mother's, with whom he had many points of character and physiognomy in common. The restorer of this "veiled head" has given it a nose of a peculiarly London cast, so that the portrait at a distance looks less like Tiberius than like his family butler. The ears are also restored in conventional fashion—altogether, the bust is a good instance of the unwarrantable liberties that are taken with ancient works of art. And yet if this London head were placed side by side with that in the Naples museum, the resemblance would appear in a flash, in spite of the disfiguring "repairs." The London portrait represents him fifteen or twenty years older than the other; there are lines of age about the face, and the eyes are more sunk under the prominent orbitals, but there can be no doubt as to the identity of the person. To compare photographs of these marbles is misleading; they must be examined on the spot, for a slight change in the position or height of the camera may affect the entire physiognomy; nor must it be forgotten that the profile differs on the two sides of the face. But what type of man these busts figure forth, can only be deciphered by those who have made up their minds on the subject beforehand. Long years will elapse before serious psychological deductions can be drawn from the data of iconography.

After a youth of exemplary virtue, and half a century more of public life during which the manners and morals of Tiberius were an honour to his age, he retired, in his sixty-ninth year, to the island of Capri, in order at last to be able to indulge his latent proclivities for cruelty and lust. So, at least, the wisest of us believed for twenty centuries. We have all heard of the reformed rake; Tiberius was the reverse: from being an admirable Crichton, he became the prototype of the Marquis de Sade. But it

is needless to go into this *res adjudicata ;* historians like Duray, Merivale, Niebuhr and Mommsen, however much they may disagree upon other questions, are at one upon this : that no scholar of to-day, with a reputation to lose, should stake it upon the veracity of Tacitus and Suetonius. That is a great step forward. Napoleon called Tacitus a " detractor of humanity " : he seems to have arrived at this opinion upon purely *a priori* reasoning, but critical researches have borne it out. The Roman historian has been tumbled from his pinnacle, and there is poetic justice in the fact that Tiberius, whose memory he succeeded in disparaging for nearly 2000 years, has been the cause of this revision of judgment. Nor need we call this sombre and stately writer hard names ; it suffices to say, what no one will deny, that he suffered from a constitutional dislike of the obvious ; his mind was involuted ; he worked with a fixed idea, and that fixed idea was diametrically opposed to the fixed ideal of Tiberius. We often observe that an individual who is not fully bred, exaggerates all the peculiarities of the race to which he desires to belong. Thus, a German Jew, domiciled in London, will eat his plover not only putrid, like the rest of us, but raw. Even so Tacitus, as an aristocrat of the lower order, was extreme in his aristocratic tendencies, he was *plus royaliste que le roi ;* for no one save really great people, like the Claudians at Rome, can afford to treat their class at its true value. According to Boissieri Tacitus " resigned himself " to the empire ; it seems to me that he resigned himself with sufficiently bad grace, and if, like Tacitus himself, I could claim the gift of knowing the inmost thoughts of men, I should say that the anti-oligarchical leanings of Tiberius appeared reprehensible to this reactionary who yearned, in his heart of hearts, for turbulent days of immature political developement, which every Roman of sense rejoiced not to have witnessed.

He took his pen in hand and wrote. All ancient literature of this class is what the Germans call a *Tendenzschrift :* we must ever remember that such a thing as truth is neither what authors endeavoured to write, nor what readers cared to read ; the extent to which the whole world was tainted with the rhetorical spirit is not easily appreciated nowadays. And beside this love of simple veracity, another recent product of human growth is that of scientific psychology. The " great psychologist " Tacitus who imposed upon ancient and mediæval Europe with his child-like and subjective method of approaching these problems, with his sublimely artful manner of reading imaginary characteristics into historical personages in order to draw puritanical conclusions therefrom, will find himself ill at ease among men who

have outgrown scholastic morality and think themselves quite moral enough when they try to discover a plain answer to this plain question : Is it true, or is it false ?

The shrewd Montaigne seems to have been the first to doubt the sincerity of Tacitus ; Schedlbauer cites a German pamphlet of 1646 in favour of Tiberius ; but it was reserved for the French sceptic movement to shatter eternally the faith hitherto reposed upon Tacitus and Suetonius. As with other authoritative writings, it was little suspected how rotten—once touched—they would prove to be. Previous to that time, these tales were blindly believed. So Gilles de Rays, who was executed in 1440, after having murdered eight hundred children, confessed in his defence that he was led into these excesses through reading Suetonius' life of Tiberius. Strange to think that, but for Suetonius—are we never to have an annotated modern translation of him ?—we might not have heard of Bluebeard.

Then followed the inevitable reaction, a wave of sentimentalism and general obfuscation from which we are, at this moment, emerging. During this long and dark period, Tiberius again put on his old character ; he was a " deified beast " ; his court was composed of " pale and trembling slaves, dissolute women and executioners." In this exhilarating company the old gentleman is supposed to have lived from the age of sixty-eight up to his death ten years later. That sane people could be found to listen to such nonsense, proves what a systematic education in " believing the impossible " can accomplish. What would they now say of Monsieur Racha, the last of a succession of conscientious scholars who have dissected the fables of Tacitus, and who consistently refers to the once revered historian as " *le poète* " ? I suspect that the chief reason why it pleased us to dislike Tiberius arose from the fact that Christ was crucified under his reign ; the culpability of the emperor in this matter is not obvious, but when religious feelings come into play, the mind ceases to trouble itself with cause and effect. One point is noteworthy : with this recent revival of rationalism has gone, hand in hand, an increased feeling of decency ; the obscenities which charmed our pious forefathers of the Grand Tours, who would muse for hours over the *Sellaria* of Capri and sell their last shirt to buy a sham sphinctrian medal, have ceased to absorb a generation fed upon healthier mental fare.

If we knew exactly why Tiberius, as a young man, shut himself up in Rhodes, we might understand the reason of his retirement to Capri. This departure for Rhodes may be regarded as the key to his character, and a great diversity of motives—fear, disgust,

cunning, hatred of Julia, ambition, self-abnegation, disappointment, pride, general moroseness—have been assigned by various writers for this step. Family reasons, the eternal intrigues of the women of the Julian and Claudian houses, and his own mother's behaviour towards him, probably weighed heavily in the case of Capri; but, as Mr. Baring-Gould points out: "Throughout life that passion to be away from the stir of life, and to be alone with his thoughts and with his books, manifested itself spasmodically." It is quite likely, too, that, convinced of the impracticability of republican and despotic systems of government, his friends and helpers all dead, he attempted the experiment of constitutional rule, interfering as little as possible in the machinery of the state, while reserving to himself the last word upon all graver matters. But, above all, he was weary, after a public life of nearly sixty years of incessant toil.

The idea of retiring from the cares of government may seem absurd to us. But we must consider the kind of work which confronted Tiberius. Modern sovereigns, whose most violent physical exercise takes the form of shooting tame pheasants or leading a drowsy state-ball quadrille, would be killed outright by a single one of his many campaigns: the economic problems with which he grappled day after day would permanently liquefy their brains. The labour of government is taken out of their hands by persons who are fitted to perform it; not one of them could say, with Tiberius, that "he found in work his only refuge from cares." Unlike him, therefore, they remain ever delightfully young, and it is hardly to be expected of them that they should bid good-bye to the world in this hey-day of perennial youth. Our rulers never retire from the cares of government: they never feel them. Tiberius, at the age of sixty-eight, felt them, and this retirement to the rock-islet of Capri is of grave significance in the world's history, inasmuch as then, for the first time, the centre of the world was displaced, the spell of the Eternal City broken and, in the words of J. R. Green, "never thoroughly restored. If Milan, Ravenna, Nicomedia, Constantinople become afterwards her rivals or supplanters as the seat of Empire, it was because Capri had lead the way." And small wonder if these closing years of the tyrant have appealed to the imagination of poets from early times, for he looms grandly in his majestic and mysterious isolation; there is pathos, too, in that ruined family life, and a tragic note in his hopeless endeavour to stem the rising flood of irrationalism and slave-spirit that were soon to overwhelm the great Roman world.

But where did all these Tiberius-legends arise? I question

whether they were actually manufactured in Rome ; they were probably a local product that found its way into the memoirs of the younger Agrippina. To the Greek population of Capri the personality and habits of this emperor were hardly sympathetic ; no doubt his presence made them feel uncomfortable, especially when contrasted with the easy-going conviviality of Augustus. A certain sycophantic spirit of ancient lineage (the Romans would have associated it with their conception of *graeculus*)—a certain hellenistico-political tendency to anonymous letters and misrepresentations, may have laid the foundations upon which Tacitus and the others erected their surprising fabrics. Dion Cassius, who ought to have known better, since he warns his readers of the general untrustworthiness of all Augustan history, was yet too much of a Greek not to enjoy a little gossip of this kind. We all know that *les absents ont toujours tort* and that, as Bacon says, " mankind is possessed of a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself "—particularly when it is told of the moral shortcomings of great people. Some escapades of Caligula or other youngsters may be responsible for the origin of a few of these tales, all of which, if related of Tiberius, are improbable, and some impossible—a fact which did not strike his biographers who, like our own earlier historians and painters, were less anxious about veracity than about making as fine a picture as possible. As Mr. Huidekoper justly observes, the persons whom Tiberius selected to accompany him to Capri were all good men, and the last to condone any form of vice. But the strongest evidence lies not in the praises of Paterculus. It lies in the silence of Seneca, who is outspoken enough as regards the irregularities of other emperors. " What necessity," asks G. M. Secondo, the contemporary of Voltaire, " drove Tiberius to indulge his lusts on Capri, when nothing hindered him from doing so at Rome ? "

But among the many explanations of these Capri orgies that of Wiedermeister must not be omitted. He seriously suggests that the thoughtful *entourage* of the old man merely carried out the precepts of the contemporary physician Celsus as to the stimulating effects of sensuous pleasures upon the declining health of Tiberius. The tortures of prisoners and the nautch-dances were only nerve-tonics, scientifically applied. Perhaps—who knows ? —the *gerocomic* method, not unknown among the ancients, was also attempted. Celsus probably drew his knowledge of it from the Orientals who still practise it ; a certain old king in the Bible derived strength from it ; as late as 1700 the great physician Boerhaave (according to Hufeland) was in the habit of recom-

mending it for the infirmities of old age, and I am told that it is not yet altogether out of fashion in good society.

Wiedermeister is a good illustration of the evils of working on the *Leitmotif* system. Even as Pasch—to my thinking—perverts some evidence and omits the rest in order to show that "ambition" is the mainspring of every action of Tiberius, so this writer finds everything to agree with his preconceived theory of "insanity." Tiberius at Capri is supposed to have suffered from the mania of persecution, ending in senile dementia. In proof of his madness is adduced the fact that *he complained of the debauched habits of his (adopted) grandson Nero.* As if Tiberius had not been making complaints of this kind, and with perfect justice, all his life. We can understand Tacitus considering that a man who lives outside *la ville* must be a lunatic or a desperate person; but a modern writer, surveying this period of Roman history, might have noticed that the gift of self-control and sanity is precisely what distinguished Tiberius in a world that was rapidly losing the faculty of dominating its reflexes. The Empire was breaking up from psychical disorders. Hysterical and otherwise mentally deranged individuals are apt to distrust the saneness of those who are placed in charge of them, and this, I think, accounts for most of the "madness" of Tiberius. In retiring at the close of an arduous life to enjoy the tranquil beauties of nature on fabled Siren shores, he was only doing what any civilised person might be expected to do.

Even at this distance of time, it seems not easy to write of this man, as Tacitus claims to have done, without passion or partiality. Of the prodigious literature which has sprung up around his name, one of the best surveys will be found in Prof. Gentile's interesting monograph. Happily it cannot be said of this controversy, as of many others, that it has produced more heat than light. I would express the opinion that the Tiberius question has been practically settled; nothing more, at least, can be learned out of books; the material at our disposal has been sifted in a perfectly satisfactory manner. Yet the record is far too incomplete to allow us to form a final judgment. To do this, we require the memoirs which he wrote himself, as well as the lost historical works of Pliny the Elder, Cremutius Cordа, Paterculus, Seneca, and others. Of this ancient literature, which would complete our picture of Tiberius, a great portion is lost for all eternity; some of it remains, in all probability, within a few feet of our reach.

Whoever wishes to consult it, must wait till a generation, which really possesses the civilisation it vaunts, shall rescue it from the lava of Herculaneum.

Mora Montravers

By Henry James

I

They were such extraordinary people to have been so odiously stricken that poor Traffle himself, always, at the best—though it was indeed just now at the worst—what his wife called horribly philosophic, fairly grimaced back, in private, at so flagrant a show of the famous, the provokedly vicious, "irony," the thing he had so often read about in clever stories, with which the usually candid countenance of their fate seemed to have begun of a sudden to bristle. Ah, that irony of fate often admired by him as a phrase and recognised as a truth—so that if he himself ever wrote a story it should certainly and most strikingly *be* about that—he fairly saw it leer at them now, could quite positively fancy it guilty of a low wink at them, in their trouble, out of that vast visage of the world that was made up for them of the separate stony stares or sympathising smirks presented by the circle of their friends. When he could get away from Jane he would pause in his worried walk—about the house or the garden, always, since he could now seldom leave her to brood alone for longer than that—and, while he shook his keys or his loose coin restlessly and helplessly in the pockets into which his hands had come to be inveterately and foolishly thrust, suffer his own familiar face, or the chance reflection of it in some gloomy glass, to respond distortedly to the grim and monstrous joke. He moved from room to room—as he easily could, at present, since their catastrophe; for when he thus sounded the depths of slumbering mirrors it was more than ever as if they were all "spare" rooms, dreary and unapplied, and as if Jane and he were quartered in them, even year after year, quite as on some dull interminable visit.

The joke was at all events in its having befallen *them*, him and his admirable, anxious, conscientious wife, who, living on their sufficient means in their discreet way, liked, respected, and even perhaps a bit envied, in the Wimbledon world (with so much good

old mahogany and so many Bartolozzis, to say nothing of their collection of a dozen family miniatures) to have to pick up again as best they could—which was the way Jane put it—the life that Miss Montravers, their unspeakable niece, though not, absolutely not and never, as every one would have it, their adopted daughter, had smashed into smithereens by leaving their roof, from one day to the other, to place herself immediately under the protection, or at least under the inspiration, of a little painter-man commonly called Puddick, who had no pretensions to being a gentleman and had given her lessons. If she had acted, unquestionably, according to her remarkable nature, this added no grace to the turn of the wheel of their fortune—which was, so deplorably, that any fledgling of their general nest (and Mora was but gone twenty-one and really clever with her brush) should *have* such a nature. It wasn't that, since her coming to them at fifteen, they had been ever, between themselves, at their ease about her—glossed over as everything had somehow come to be by the treacherous fact of her beauty. She had been such a credit to them that way that if it hadn't put them, as earnest observers, quite off their guard, the dazzle and charm of it appeared mostly to have misled their acquaintance. That was the worst cruelty for them, that with such a personal power to please she shouldn't, even on some light irregular line, have flown, as might have been conceived, higher. These things were dreadful, were even grotesque, to say ; but what wasn't so now —after his difficult, his critical, his distinctly conclusive and, above all, as he secretly appraised it, his unexpectedly and absurdly interesting interview with Mr. Puddick ? This passage, deplorably belated by Mora's own extraordinarily artful action, had but just taken place, and it had sent him back to Jane saddled with the queerest and most difficult errand of his life.

He hadn't, however, on his return, at once sought her in the drawing-room—though her plan of campaign had been that they should fly their flag as high as ever, and, changing none of their refined habits, sit in that bow-windowed place of propriety, even as in a great glazed public cage, as much as ever—he had sneaked away again to tip-toe, with his pensive private humour, over the whole field ; observing in her society, for the most part, the forms of black despair and grim participation, if even at the same time avoiding inconsiderate grossness ; but at bottom, since his moments with Puddick, almost ready to take, as a man of the world, the impartial, the detached, in fact—hang it !—even the amused view. It hadn't as yet made a shade of difference in his tone that Mora was Jane's niece, and not even her very own, but

only the child of her half-sister, whose original union with Malcolm Montravers had moreover made a break between them that had waited for healing till after the ill-starred husband's death, and the eve of that of the perfectly disillusioned wife; but in these slightly rueful, though singularly remedial, dips into thoughtful solitude he had begun at last to treat himself to luxuries that he could feel he was paying for. Mora was, accurately speaking, no sharer of his blood, and he absolutely denied her the right not alone socially to dishonour, but, beyond a mere ruffle of the surface, morally to discompose him; mixed with which rather awkwardly, not to say perhaps a bit perversely, was the sense that as the girl was showing up, unmistakably, for one of the most curious of "cases"—the term Puddick himself had used about her—she wouldn't be unlikely to reward some independent, some intelligent notice.

He had never from the first, to do himself—or to do *her*—justice, felt he had really known her, small, cool, supposedly childish, yet not a bit confiding, verily not a bit appealing, presence as she was; but clearly he should know her now, and to do so might prove indeed, a job. Not that he wanted to be *too* cold-blooded about her—that is in the way of enlightened appreciation, the detachment of the simply scandalised state being another matter; for this was somehow to leave poor Jane, and poor Jane's gloom of misery, in the lurch. But once safely back from the studio, Puddick's own—where he hadn't been sure, upon his honour, that some coarse danger mightn't crop up—he indulged in a surreptitious vow that if any "fun," whether just freely or else more or less acutely speaking, was to come of the matter, he'd be blamed if he'd be wholly deprived of it. The possibility of an incalculable sort of interest—in fact, quite a refined sort, could there be refinement in such doings—had somehow come out with Puddick's at once saying: "Certainly sir, I'll marry her if you and Mrs. Traffle absolutely insist—and if Mora herself (the great point!) can be brought round to look at it in that way. But I warn you that if I do, and that if she makes that concession, I shall probably lose my hold of her—which won't be best, you know, for any one concerned. You don't suppose I don't *want* to make it all right, do you?" the surprising young man had gone on. "The question's only of what *is* right—or what will be if we keep our heads and take time—with such an extraordinary person as Mora, don't you see? to deal with. You must grant me," Mr. Puddick had wound up, "that she's a rum case."

II

What he had first felt, of course, was the rare coolness of it, the almost impudent absence of any tone of responsibility; which had begun by seeming to make the little painter-man's own case as "rum," surely, as one could imagine it. He had gone, poor troubled Traffle, after the talk, straight to his own studio, or to the rather chill and vague, if scrupulously neat, pavilion at the garden-end, which he had put up eight years ago in the modest hope that it would increasingly inspire him; since it wasn't making preparations and invoking facilities that constituted swagger, but, much rather, behaving as if one's powers could boldly dispense with them. He was certain Jane would come to him there on hearing of him from the parlour-maid, to whom he had said a word in the hall. He wasn't afraid —no—of having to speak a little as he felt; but, though well aware of his wife's impatience, he wasn't keen, either, for any added intensity of effort to abound only in Mrs. Traffle's sense. He required space and margin, he required a few minutes' time, to say to himself frankly that this dear dismal lady *had* no sense—none at least of their present wretched question—that was at all worth developing: since he of course couldn't possibly remark it to poor Jane. He had perhaps never remarked for his own private benefit so many strange things as between the moment of his letting himself again into the perpetually swept and garnished temple of his own perfunctory æsthetic rites, where everything was ready to his hand and only that weak tool hung up, and his glimpse of Jane, from the smaller window, as she came down the garden walk. Puddick's studio had been distinctly dirty, and Puddick himself, from head to foot, despite his fine pale little face and bright, direct, much more searching than shifting eyes, almost as spotty as the large morsel of rag with which he had so oddly begun to rub his fingers while standing there to receive Mora's nearest male relative; but the canvas on his easel, the thing that even in the thick of his other adventure was making so straight a push for the Academy, almost embarrassed that relative's eyes, not to say that relative's conscience, by the cleanness of its appeal. Traffle hadn't come to admire his picture or to mark how he didn't muddle where not muddling was vital; he had come to denounce his conduct, and yet now, perhaps most of all, felt the strain of having pretended so to ignore what would intensely have interested him. Thanks to this barren artifice, to the after-effect of it on his nerves, his own preposterous place, all polish and poverty, pointed such a moral

as he had never before dreamed of. Spotless it might be, unlike any surface or aspect presented under the high hard Puddick north-light, since it showed no recording trace, no homely smear—since it had had no hour of history. That was the way truth showed and history came out—in spots : by them, and by nothing else, you knew the real, as you knew the leopard, so that the living creature and the living life equally had to have them. Stuffed animals and weeping women were—well, another question. He had gathered, on the scene of his late effort, that Mora didn't weep, that she was still perfectly pleased with her shocking course ; her complacency indeed remained at such a pitch as to make any question of her actual approach, on whatever basis, or any rash direct challenge of her, as yet unadvisable. He was at all events, after another moment, in presence of Jane's damp severity ; *she* never ceased crying, but her tears froze as they fell—though not, unfortunately, to firm ice, any surface that would bear the weight of large argument. The only thing for him, none the less, was to carry the position with a rush, and he came at once to the worst.

"He'll do it—he's willing ; but he makes a most striking point—I mean given the girl as we know her and as he of course by this time must. He keeps his advantage, he thinks, by not forcing the note—don't you see ?" Traffle himself—under the quick glow of his rush—actually saw more and more. "He's feeling his way—he used that expression to me ; and again I haven't to tell you, any more than he really had to tell me, that with Mora one has to sit tight. He puts on us, in short, the responsibility."

He had felt how more than ever her "done" yellow hair—done only in the sense of an elaborately unbecoming conformity to the spasmodic prescriptions, undulations and inflations of the day, not in that of any departure from its pale straw-coloured truth—was helped by her white invalidical shawl to intensify those reminders of their thin ideals, their bloodless immunity, their generally compromised and missed and forfeited frankness, that every other feature of their domestic scene had just been projecting for him. "Responsibility—we responsible ?" She gaped with the wonder of it.

"I mean that we should be if anything were to happen by our trying to impose on her *our* view of her one redemption. I give it you for his own suggestion—and thereby worth thinking of."

But Jane could take nothing in. "He suggests that he needn't marry her, and you agree with him ? Pray what is there

left to 'happen,'" she went on before he could answer, "after her having happened so completely to disgrace herself?"

He turned his back a moment—he had shortly before noticed a framed decoration, a "refined" Japanese thing that gave accent, as he would have said, to the neatness of his mouse-grey wall, and that needed straightening. Those spare apprehensions had somehow, it was true, suddenly been elbowed out of his path by richer ones; but he obeyed his old habit. "She can leave him, my dear; that's what she can do—and not, you may well believe, to come back to us."

"If she *will* come I'll take her—even now," said Jane Traffle; "and who can ask of me more than that?"

He slid about a little, sportively, on his polished floor, as if he would have liked to skate, while he vaguely, inaudibly hummed. "Our difficulty is that she doesn't ask the first blessed thing of us. We've been, you see, too stupid about her. Puddick doesn't say it, but he knows it—that I felt. She feels what she is—and so does he."

"What she is? She's an awful little person"—and Mrs. Traffle stated it with a cold finality she had never yet used.

"Well then, that's what she feels!—even though it's probably not the name she employs in connection with it. She has tremendously the sense of life."

"That's bad," cried Jane, "when you haven't—not even feebly!—the sense of decency."

"How do you know, my dear," he returned, "when you've never had it?" And then as she but stared, since he couldn't mean she hadn't the sense of decency, he went on, really quite amazed at himself: "People must have both if possible, but if they can only have one I'm not sure that that one, as we've had it—not at all 'feebly,' as you say!—is the better of the two. What do we know about the sense of life—when it breaks out with real freedom? It has never broken out here, my dear, for long enough to leave its breath on the window-pane. But they've got it strong down there in Puddick's studio."

She looked at him as if she didn't even understand his language, and she flopped thereby into the trap set for her by a single word. "Is she living *in* the studio?"

He didn't avoid her eyes. "I don't know where she's living."

"And do I understand that you didn't ask him?"

"It was none of my business—I felt that there in an unexpected way; I couldn't somehow *not* feel it—and I suggest, my dear, accordingly, that it's also none of yours. I wouldn't answer, if you really want to know," he wound up, hanging fire an

instant, but candidly bringing it out—" I wouldn't answer, if you really want to know, for their relations."

Jane's eyebrows mounted and mounted. " Whoever in the world would ? "

He waited a minute, looking off at his balanced picture—though not as if now really seeing it. " I'm not talking of what the vulgar would say—or *are* saying, of course, to their fill. I'm not talking of what those relations may be. I'm talking—well," he said, " of what they mayn't."

" You mean they may be innocent ? "

" I think it possible. They're, as he calls it, a ' rum ' pair. They're not like us."

" If we're not like them," she broke in, " I grant you I hope not."

" We've no imagination, you see," he quietly explained—" whereas they have it on tap, for the sort of life they lead down there, all the while." He seemed wistfully to figure it out. " For us only one kind of irregularity is possible—for them, no doubt, twenty kinds."

Poor Jane listened this time—and so intently that after he had spoken she still rendered his obscure sense the tribute of a wait. " You think it's possible she's not living with him ? "

" I think anything possible."

" Then what in the world did she want ? "

" She wanted in the first place to get away from *us*. We didn't like her——"

" Ah, we never let her see it ! "—Jane could triumphantly make *that* point.

It but had for him, however, an effect of unconscious comedy. " No, that was it—and she wanted to get away from everything we did to prevent her ; from our solemn precautions *against* her seeing it. We didn't understand her, or we should have understood how much she must have wanted to. We were afraid of her in short, and she wanted not to see our contortions over it. Puddick isn't beautiful—though he has a fine little head and a face with some awfully good marks ; but he's a Greek god, for statuesque calm, compared with us. He isn't afraid of her."

Jane drew herself elegantly up. " I understood you just now that it's exactly what he *is !* "

Traffle reflected. " That's only for his having to deal with her in our way. Not if he handles her in his own."

" And what, pray, is his own ? "

Traffle, his hands in his pockets, resumed his walk, touching with the points of his shoes certain separations between the

highly-polished planks of his floor. "Well, why should we have to know?"

"Do you mean we're to wash our hands of her?"

He only circulated at first—but quite sounding a low whistle of exhilaration. He felt happier than for a long time; broken as at a blow was the formation of ice that had somehow covered all his days, the whole ground of life, what he would have called the things under. There they were, the things under. He could see them now; which was practically what he after a little replied. "It will be so interesting." He pulled up, none the less, as he turned, before her poor scared and mottled face, her still suffused eyes, her "dressed" head parading above these miseries.

She vaguely panted, as from a dance through bush and briar. "But *what*, Sidney, will be?"

"To see what becomes of her. Without our muddling." Which was a term, however, that she so protested against his use of that he had on the spot, with more kindness than logic, to attenuate, admitting her right to ask him who could do less—less than take the stand she proposed; though indeed coming back to the matter that evening after dinner (they never really got away from it; but they had the consciousness now of false starts in other directions, followed by the captive returns that were almost as ominous of what might still be before them as the famous tragic *rentrêe* of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette from Varennes); when he brought up, for their common relief, the essential fact of the young woman's history as they had suffered it to shape itself: her coming to them bereft and homeless, addressed, packed and registered after the fashion of a postal packet; their natural flutter of dismay and apprehension, but their patient acceptance of the charge; the five flurried governesses she had had in three years, who had so bored her and whom she had so deeply disconcerted; the remarkable disposition for drawing and daubing that she had shown from the first and that had led them to consent to her haunting of a class in town, that had made her acquainted with the as yet wholly undistinguished young artist, Walter Puddick, who, with a couple of other keen and juvenile adventurers of the brush, "criticised," all at their ease, according to the queer new licence of the day, and with nobody to criticise *them*, eighty supposed daughters of gentlemen; the uncontrolled spread of her social connection in London, on the oldest lines, as a proof of this prosecution of her studies; her consequent prolonged absences, her strange explanations and deeper duplicities, and presently

her bolder defiances ; with her staying altogether, at last, one fine day, under pretext of a visit at Highgate, and writing them at the end of a week, during which they had been without news of her, that her visit was to Mr. Puddick and his " set," and was likely to be of long duration, as he was " looking after her," and there were plenty of people in the set to help, and as she, above all, wanted nothing more : nothing more, of course, than her two hundred and seventy a year, the scant remainder of her mother's fortune that she had come into the use of, under that battered lady's will, on her eighteenth birthday, and through which her admirers, every member of the set, no doubt, wouldn't have found her least admirable. Puddick wouldn't be paying for her, by the blessing of heaven—*that*, Traffle recognised, would have been ground for anything ; the case rather must be the other way round. She was " treating " the set, probably, root and branch—magnificently ; so no wonder she was having success and liking it. Didn't Jane recognise, therefore, how in the light of this fact almost any droll *different* situation—different from the common and less edifying turn of such affairs—might here prevail ? He could imagine even a fantastic delicacy ; not on the part of the set at large perhaps, but on that of a member or two.

What Jane most promptly recognised, she showed him in answer to this, was that, with the tone he had so extraordinarily begun to take on the subject, his choice of terms left her staring. Their ordeal would have to be different indeed from anything she had yet felt it for it to affect her as droll, and Mora's behaviour to repudiate at every point and in some scarce conceivable way its present appearance for it to strike her either as delicate or as a possible cause of delicacy. In fact she could have but her own word—Mora was a monster.

" Well,"—he laughed—quite brazen about it now—" if she is it's because she has paid for it ! Why the deuce did her stars, unless to make her worship gods entirely other than Jane Traffle's, rig her out with a name that puts such a premium on adventures ? ' Mora Montravers '—it paints the whole career for you. She *is*, one does feel, her name ; but how couldn't she be ? She'd dishonour it and its grand air if she weren't."

" Then by that reasoning you admit," Mrs. Traffle returned with more of an argumentative pounce than she had perhaps ever achieved in her life, " that she *is* misconducting herself."

It pulled him up but ten seconds. " It isn't, love, that she's misconducting herself—it's that she's conducting, positively, and by her own lights doubtless quite responsibly, Miss Mon-

travers through the pre-appointed circle of that young lady's experience." Jane turned on this a desolate back; but he only went on. "It would have been better for us perhaps if she could have been a Traffle—but, failing that, I think I should, on the ground that sinning at all one should sin boldly, have elected for Montravers outright. That *does* the thing—it gives the unmistakable note. And if 'Montravers' made it probable 'Mora'—don't you see, dearest?—made it sure. Would you *wish* her to change to Puddick?" This brought her round again, but as the affirmative hadn't quite leaped to her lips he found time to continue. "Unless indeed they can make some arrangement by which he takes *her* name. Perhaps we can work it that way!"

His suggestion was thrown out as for its positive charm; but Jane stood now, to do her justice, as a rock. "She's doing something that, surely, no girl in the world ever did before—in preferring, as I so strangely understand you, that her lover *shouldn't* make her the obvious reparation. But is her reason her dislike of his vulgar name?"

"That has no weight for *you*, Jane?" Traffle asked in reply.

Jane dismally shook her head. "Who, indeed, as you say, are *we?* Her reason—if it is her reason—is vulgarer still."

He didn't believe it could be Mora's reason, and though he had made, under the impression of the morning, a brave fight, he had after reflection to allow still for much obscurity in their question. But he had none the less retained his belief in the visibly uncommon young man, and took occasion to make of his wife an inquiry that hadn't hitherto come up in so straight a form and that sounded of a sudden rather odd. "Are you at all *attached* to her? Can you give me your word for *that?*"

She faced him again like a waning wintry moon. "Attached to Mora? Why she's my sister's child."

"Ah that, my dear, is no answer! Can you assure me on your honour that you're conscious of anything you can call real affection for her?"

Jane blankly brooded. "What has that to do with it?"

"I think it has everything. If we don't feel a tenderness."

"*You* certainly strike me as feeling one!" Mrs. Traffle sarcastically cried.

He weighed it, but to the effect of his protesting. "No, not enough for me to demand of her to marry to spare my sensibility."

His wife continued to gloom. "What is there in what she has done to *make* us tender?"

"Let us admit then, if there's nothing, that it has made us tough! Only then we must *be* tough. If we're having the strain and the pain of it let us also have the relief and the fun."

"Oh the 'fun'!" Jane wailed; but adding soon after: "If she'll marry him I'll forgive her."

"Ah, that's not enough!" he pronounced as they went to bed.

III

Yet he was to feel too the length that even forgiving her would have to go—for Jane at least—when, a couple of days later, they both, from the drawing-room window, saw, to their liveliest astonishment, the girl alight at the gate. She had taken a fly from the station, and their attention caught her as she paused apparently to treat with the cabman of the question of his waiting for her or coming back. It seemed settled in a moment that he should wait; he didn't remount his box, and she came in and up the garden-path. Jane had already flushed, and with violence, at the apparition, and in reply to her companion's instant question had said: "Yes, I'll see her if she has come back."

"Well, she *has* come back."

"She's keeping her cab—she hasn't come to stay." Mrs. Traffle had gained a far door of retreat.

"You won't speak to her?"

"Only if she has come to stay. *Then*—volumes!"

He had remained near the window, held fast there by the weight of indefinite obligation that his wife's flight from the field shifted to his shoulders. "But if she comes back to stay what can Puddick do?"

This kept her an instant. "To stay till he marries her is what I mean."

"Then if she asks for you—as she only must—am I to tell her that?"

Flushed and exalted, her hand on the door, Jane had for this question a really grand moment. "Tell her that if he will she shall come in—with your assent—for my four hundred."

"Oh, oh!" he ambiguously sounded while she whisked away, and the door from the hall was at the same time thrown open by the parlour-maid. "Miss Montravers!" announced, with a shake of anguish, that domestic, whose heightened colour and scared eyes conformed to her mistress's example. Traffle felt his own cheek, for that matter, unnaturally glow, and the very

first of his observations as Mora was restored to his sight might have been that she alone of them all wore her complexion with no difference. There was little doubt moreover that this charming balance of white and pink couldn't have altered but to its loss; and indeed when they were left alone the whole immediate effect for him of the girl's standing there in immediate bright silence was that of her having come simply to reaffirm her extraordinary prettiness. It might have been just to say: "You've thought, and you think, all sorts of horrible things about me, but observe how little my appearance matches them, and in fact keep up coarse views if you can in the light of my loveliness." Yet it wasn't as if she had changed, either, even to the extent of that sharper emphasis: he afterwards reflected, as he lived over this passage, that he must have taken for granted in her, with the life she was leading, so to call it, some visibility of boldness, some significant surface—of which absurd supposition her presence, at the end of three minutes, had disabused him to the point of making all the awkwardness his and leaving none at all for her. That was a side of things, the awkward, that she clearly meant never again to recognise in conversation —though certainly from the first, ever, she had brushed it by lightly enough. She was in truth exactly the same—except for her hint that they might have forgotten how pretty she *could* be; and he further made sure she would incur neither pains nor costs for any new attempt on them. The Mora they had always taken her for would serve her perfectly still; that young woman was bad enough, in all conscience, to hang together through anything that might yet happen.

So much he was to feel she had conveyed, and that it was the little person presenting herself, at her convenience, on these terms who had been all the while, in their past, their portentous inmate—since what had the portent been, by the same token, but exactly of this? By the end of three minutes more our friend's sole thought was to conceal from her that he had looked for some vulgar sign—such as, reported to Wimbledon tea-tables, could be confidentially mumbled about: he was almost as ashamed of that elderly innocence as if she had caught him in the fact of disappointment at it. Meanwhile she had expressed her errand very simply and serenely. "I've come to see you because I don't want to lose sight of you—my being no longer with you is no reason for that." She was going to ignore, he saw—and she would put it through: she was going to ignore everything that suited her, and the quantity might become prodigious. Thus it would rest upon *them*, poor things, to disallow, if they must, the

grace of these negatives—in which process she would watch them flounder without help. It opened out before him—a vertiginous view of a gulf ; the abyss of what the ignoring would include for the convenient general commerce ; of what might lie behind, in fine, should the policy foreshadow the lurking quantity. He knew the vague void for one he should never bridge, and that to put on emphasis where Mora chose to neglect it would be work only for those who " gathered samphire " like the unfortunates in " King Lear," or those who, by profession, planted lightning-rods at the tips of tremendous towers. He was committed to pusillanimity, which would yet have to figure for him, before he had done with it, he knew, as a gallant independence, by letting ten minutes go without mention of Jane. Mora had put him somehow into the position of having to explain that her aunt wouldn't see her—precisely that was the mark of the girl's attitude ; but he'd be hanged if he'd do anything of the sort.

It was therefore like giving poor Jane basely away, his not, to any tune, speaking for her—and all the more that their visitor sat just long enough to let his helplessness grow and reach perfection. By this felicity it was he who showed—and for her amusement and profit—all the change she kept him from imputing to herself. He presented her—she held him up to himself as presenting her—with a new uncle, made over, to some loss of dignity, on purpose for her ; and nothing could less have suited their theory of his right relation than to have a private understanding with her at his wife's expense. However, gracefully grave and imperturbable, inimitably armed by her charming correctness, as she sat there, it would be her line in life, he was certain, to reduce many theories, solemn Wimbledon theories about the scandalous person, to the futility of so much broken looking-glass. Not naming her aunt—since *he* didn't—she had of course to start, for the air of a morning call, some other hare or two ; she asked for news of their few local friends quite as if these good people mightn't ruefully have " cut " her, by what they had heard, should they have met her out on the road. She spoke of Mr. Puddick with perfect complacency, and in particular held poor Traffle very much as some master's fiddle-bow might have made him hang on the semi-tone of a silver string when she referred to the visit he had paid the artist and to the latter's having wondered whether he liked what he saw. *She* liked, more and more, Mora intimated, what was offered to her own view ; Puddick was going to do, she was sure, such brilliant work—so that she hoped immensely he would come again. Traffle found himself, yes—it was positive—staying his

breath for this ; there was, in fact, a moment, that of her first throwing off her free " Puddick," when it wouldn't have taken much more to make him almost wish that, for rounded perfection, she'd say " Walter " at once. He would scarce have guaranteed even that there hadn't been just then some seconds of his betraying that imagination in the demoralised eyes that her straight, clear, quiet beams sounded and sounded, against every presumption of what might have been. What essentially happened, at any rate, was that by the time she went she had not only settled him in the sinister attitude of having lost all interest in her aunt, but had made him give her for the profane reason of it that he was gaining so much in herself.

He rushed in again, for that matter, to a frank clearance the moment he had seen the girl off the premises, attended her, that is, back to her fly. He hadn't at this climax remarked to her that she must come again—which might have meant either of two or three incoherencies and have signified thereby comparatively little ; he had only fixed on her a rolling eye—for it rolled, he strangely felt, without leaving her ; which had the air of signifying heaven knew what. She took it, clearly, during the moment she sat there before her start, for the most rather than for the least it might mean ; which again made him gape with the certitude that ever thereafter she would make him seem to have meant what she liked. She had arrived in a few minutes at as wondrous a recipe or as quick an inspiration for this as if she had been a confectioner using some unprecedented turn of the ladle for some supersubtle cream. He was a proved conspirator from that instant on, which was practically what he had qualified Jane, within ten minutes—if Jane had only been refreshingly sharper—to pronounce him. For what else in the world did it come to, his failure of ability to attribute any other fine sense to Mora's odd " step " than the weird design of just giving them a lead ? They were to leave her alone, by her sharp prescription, and she would show them once for all how to do it. Cutting her dead wasn't leaving her alone—any idiot could do that ; conversing with her affably was the privilege she offered, and the one he had so effectually embraced—he made a clean breast of this—that he had breathed to her no syllable of the message left with him by her aunt.

" Then you mean," this lady now inquired, " that I'm to go and call upon her, at that impossible place, just as if she were the pink of propriety and we had no exception whatever to take to her conduct ? Then you mean," Mrs. Traffle had pursued with a gleam in her eye of more dangerous portent than any he had ever

known himself to kindle there—" then you mean that I'm to grovel before a chit of a creature on whom I've lavished every benefit, and to whom I've actually offered every indulgence, and who shows herself, in return for it all, by what I make out from your rigmarole, a fiend of insolence as well as of vice ? "

The danger descried by Sidney Traffle was not that of any further act of violence from Jane than this freedom of address to him, unprecedented in their long intercourse—this sustained and, as he had in a degree to allow, not unfounded note of sarcasm ; such a resort to which, on his wife's part, would, at the best, mark the prospect for him, in a form flushed with novelty, of much conscious self-discipline. What looked out of her dear foolish face, very much with the effect of a new and strange head boldly shown at an old and familiar pacific window, was just the assurance that he might hope for no abashed sense in her of differing from him on all this ground as she had never differed on any. It was as if now, unmistakably, she *liked* to differ, the ground being her own and he scarce more than an unwarranted poacher there. Of course it *was* her own, by the fact, first, of Mora's being her, not his, sister's child ; and, second, by all the force with which her announced munificence made it so. He took a moment to think how he could best meet her challenge, and then reflected that there was, happily, nothing like the truth—*his* truth, of which it was the insidious nature to prevail. " What she wanted, I make out, was but to give us the best pleasure she could think of. The pleasure, I mean, of our not only recognising how little we need worry about her, but of our seeing as well how pleasant it may become for us to keep in touch with her."

These words, he was well aware, left his wife—given her painful narrowness—a bristling quiver of retorts to draw from ; yet it was not without a silent surprise that he saw her, with her irritated eyes on him, extract the bolt of finest point. He had rarely known her to achieve that discrimination before " The pleasure then, in her view, you ' make out '—since you make out such wonders !—is to be all for us only ? "

He found it fortunately given him still to smile. " That will depend, dear, on our appreciating it enough to make things agreeable to *her* in order to get it. But as she didn't inquire for you," he hastened to add, " I don't—no I don't—advise your going to see her *even* for the interest I speak of ! " He bethought himself. " We must wait a little."

" Wait till she gets worse ? "

He felt after a little that he should be able now always to command a kindly indulgent tone. " I'll go and see her if you like."

"Why in the world should I like it? Is it your idea—for the pleasure you so highly appreciate, and heaven knows what you mean by it!—to cultivate with her a free relation of your own?"

"No"—he promptly turned—"I suggest it only as acting *for* you. Unless," he went on, "you decidedly wish to act altogether for yourself."

For some moments she made no answer; though when she at last spoke it was as if it *were* an answer. "I shall send for Mr. Puddick."

"And whom will you send?"

"I suppose I'm capable of a note," Jane replied.

"Yes, or you might even telegraph. But are you sure he'll come?"

"Am I sure, you mean," she asked, "that his companion will let him? I can but try, at all events, and shall at any rate have done what I can."

"I think he's afraid of her——"

Traffle had so begun, but she had already taken him up. "And you're not, you mean—and that's why you're so eager?"

"Ah my dear, my dear?" He met it with his strained grimace. "Let us by all means," he also, however, said, "have him if we can."

On which it was, for a little, that they strangely faced each other. She let his accommodation lie while she kept her eyes on him, and in a moment she had come up, as it were, elsewhere. "If I thought you'd see her——!"

"That I'd see her?"—for she had paused again.

"See her and go on with her—well, without my knowledge," quavered poor Jane, "I assure you you'd seem to me even worse than her. So will you promise me?" she ardently added.

"Promise you what, dear?" He spoke quite mildly.

"Not to see her in secret—which I believe would kill me."

"Oh, oh, oh, love!" Traffle smiled while she positively glared.

IV

Three days having elapsed, however, he had to feel that things had considerably moved on his being privileged to hear his wife, in the drawing-room, where they entertained Mr. Puddick at tea, put the great question straighter to that visitor than he himself, Sidney Traffle, could either have planned or presumed to do. Flushed to a fever after they had beat about the bush a little, Jane didn't flinch from her duty. "What I want to know in plain terms, if you please, is whether or no you're

Mora's lover ?" "Plain terms"—she did have inspirations ! so that under the shock he turned away, humming, as ever, in his impatience, and, the others being seated over the vain pretence of the afternoon repast, left the young man to say what he might. It was a fool's question, and there was always a gape for the wisest (the greater the wisdom and the greater the folly) in any apprehension of such. As if he were going to say, remarkable Puddick, not less remarkable in his way than Mora—to say, that is, anything that would suit Jane ; and as if it didn't give her away for a goose that she should assume he was ! Traffle had never more tiptoed off to the far end of the room, whether for pretence of a sudden interest in his precious little old Copley Fielding or on any other extemporised ground, than while their guest momentarily hung fire ; but though he winced it was as if he now liked to wince—the occasions she gave him for doing so were such a sign of his abdication. He had wholly stepped aside, and she could flounder as she would : he had found exactly the formula that saved his dignity, that expressed his sincerity, and that yet didn't touch his curiosity. "I see it would be indelicate for me to go further —yes, love, I do see *that* :" such was the concession he had resorted to for a snap of the particular tension of which we a moment ago took the measure. This had entailed Jane's gravely pronouncing him, for the first time in her life, ridiculous ; as if, in common sense—! She used that term also with much freedom now ; at the same time that it hadn't prevented her almost immediately asking him if *he* would mind writing her letter. Nothing could suit him more, from the moment she was ostensibly to run the show—as for her benefit he promptly phrased the matter—than that she should involve herself in as many inconsistencies as possible ; since if he did such things in spite of his scruple this was as nothing to her needing him at every step in spite of her predominance.

His delicacy was absurd for her because Mora's indecency had made this, by her logic, the only air they could now breathe ; yet he knew how it nevertheless took his presence to wind her up to her actual challenge of their guest. Face to face with that personage alone she would have failed of the assurance required for such crudity ; deeply unprepared as she really was, poor dear, for the crudity to which she might, as a consequence, have opened the gates. She lived altogether thus—and nothing, to her husband's ironic view, he flattered himself, could be droller —in perpetual yearning, deprecating, in bewildered and muddled communion with the dreadful law of crudity ; as if in very truth, to *his* amused sense, the situation hadn't of necessity to be dressed

up to the eyes for them in every sort of precaution and paraphrase. Traffle had privately reached the point of seeing it, at its high pitch of mystery and bravery, absolutely defy any common catchword. The one his wife had just employed struck him, while he hunched his shoulders at the ominous pause she had made inevitable for sturdy Puddick, as the vulgarest, and he had time largely to blush before an answer came. He had written, explicitly on Jane's behalf, to request the favour of an interview, but had been careful not to intimate that it was to put that artless question. To have dragged a busy person, a serious person, out from town on the implication of his being treated for reward to so *bête* an appeal—no, one surely couldn't appear to have been concerned in that. Puddick had been under no obligation to come—one might honestly have doubted whether he would even reply. However, his power of reply proved not inconsiderable, as consorted with his having presented himself not a bit ruefully or sulkily, but all easily and coolly, and even to a visible degree in a spirit of unprejudiced curiosity. It was as if he had practically forgotten Traffle's own invasion of him at his studio—in addition to which who indeed knew what mightn't have happened between the Chelsea pair in a distracting or freshly epoch-making way since then ?—and was ready to show himself for perfectly good-natured, but for also naturally vague about what they could want of him again. "It depends, ma'am, on the sense I understand you to attach to that word," was in any case the answer to which he at his convenience treated Jane.

"I attach to it the only sense," she returned, "that could force me—by *my* understanding of it—to anything so painful as this inquiry. I mean are you so much lovers as to make it indispensable you should immediately marry ?"

"Indispensable to who, ma'am ?" was what Traffle heard their companion now promptly enough produce. To which, as it appeared to take her a little aback, he added : "Indispensable to *you*, do you mean, Mrs. Traffle ? Of course, you see, I haven't any measure of *that*."

"Should you have any such measure "—and with it she had for her husband the effect now of quite "speaking up "—"if I were to give you my assurance that my niece will come into money when the proper means are taken of making her connection with you a little less—or perhaps I should say altogether less—distressing and irregular ?"

The auditor of this exchange rocked noiselessly away from his particular point of dissociation, throwing himself at random upon another, before Mr. Puddick appeared again to have made

up his mind, or at least to have adjusted his intelligence ; but the movement had been on Traffle's part but the instinct to stand off more and more—a vague effort of retreat that didn't prevent the young man's next response to pressure from ringing out in time to overtake him. " Is what you want me to understand then that you'll handsomely pay her if she marries me ? Is it to tell me that that you asked me to come ? " It was queer, Sidney felt as he held his breath, how he kept liking this inferior person the better —the better for his carrying himself so little like any sort of sneak—for every minute spent in his company. They had brought him there at the very best to patronise him, and now would simply have to reckon with his showing clearly for so much more a person " of the world " than they. Traffle, it was true, was becoming, under the precious initiation opened to him by Mora, whether directly or indirectly, much more a man of the world than ever yet : so much as that at least he could turn over in his secret soul while their visitor pursued. " Perhaps you also mean, ma'am, that you suppose me to require that knowledge to determine my own behaviour—in the sense that if she comes in for money I may clutch at the way to come into it too ? " He put this as the straightest of questions ; yet he also, it was marked, followed up that side-issue further, as if to fight shy of what Jane wanted most to know. " Is it your idea of me that I haven't married her because she isn't rich enough, and that on what you now tell me I may think better of it ? Is that how you see me, Mrs. Traffle ? " he asked, at his quiet pitch, without heat.

It might have floored his hostess a little, to her husband's vision, but she seemed at once to sit up, on the contrary, so much straighter, that he, after hearing her, immediately turned round. " Don't you *want*, Mr. Puddick, to be able to marry a creature so beautiful and so clever ? "

This was somehow, suddenly, on Jane's part, so prodigious, for art and subtlety, Traffle recognised, that he had come forward again and a remarkable thing had followed. Their guest had noticed his return and now looked up at him from over the tea-table, looked in a manner so direct, so intelligent, so quite amusedly critical, that, afresh, before he knew it, he had treated the little fact as the flicker of a private understanding between them, and had just cynically—for it was scarce covertly—smiled back at him in the independence of it. So there he was again, Sidney Traffle ; after having tacitly admitted to Mora that her aunt was a goose of geese—compared to himself and *her*—he was at present putting that young woman's accomplice

up to the same view of his conjugal loyalty, which might be straightway reported to the girl. Well, what was he, all the same, to do ? Jane *was*, on all the ground that now spread immeasurably about them, a goose of geese : all that had occurred was that she more showily displayed it ; and that she might indeed have had a momentary sense of triumph when the best that their friend first found to meet her withal proved still another evasion of the real point. " I don't think, if you'll allow me to say so, Mrs. Traffle, that you've any right to ask me, in respect to Miss Montravers, what I ' want '—or that I'm under any obligation to tell you. I've come to you, quite in the dark, because of Mr. Traffle's letter, and so that you shouldn't have the shadow of anything to complain of. But please remember that I've neither appealed to you in any way, nor put myself in a position of responsibility toward you."

So far, but only so far, however, had he successfully proceeded before Jane was down upon him in her new trenchant form. " It's not of your responsibility to us I'm talking, but all of your responsibility to *her*. We efface ourselves," she all effectively bridled, " and we're prepared for every reasonable sacrifice. But we do still a little care what becomes of the child to whom we gave up years of our life. If you care enough for her to live with her, don't you care enough to work out some way of making her your very own by the aid of such help as we're eager to render ? Or are we to take from you, as against that, that even thus with the way made easy, she's so amazingly constituted as to prefer, in the face of the world, your actual terms of intercourse ? "

The young man had kept his eyes on her without flinching, and so he continued after she had spoken. He then drank down what remained of his tea and, pushing back his chair, got up. He hadn't the least arrogance, not the least fatuity of type—save so far as it might be offensive in such a place to show a young head modelled as with such an intention of some one of the finer economic uses, and a young face already a little worn as under stress of that economy—but he couldn't help his looking, while he pulled down his not very fresh waistcoat, just a trifle like a person who had expected to be rather better regaled. This came indeed, for his host, to seeing that he looked bored ; which was again, for that gentleman, a source of humiliation. What style of conversation, comparatively, on the showing of it, wouldn't he and Mora all the while be having together ? If they would only invite *him*, their uncle—or rather no, when it came to that, not a bit, worse luck, their uncle—if they would only invite him, their humble admirer, to tea ! During which

play of reflection and envy, at any rate, Mr. Puddick had prepared to take his leave. "I don't think I can talk to you, really, about my 'terms of intercourse' with any lady." He wasn't superior, exactly—wasn't so in fact at all, but was nevertheless crushing, and all the more that his next word seemed spoken, in its persistent charity, for their help. "If it's important you should get at that sort of thing it strikes me you should do so by the lady herself."

Our friend, at this, no longer stayed his hand. "Mrs. Traffle doesn't see her," he explained to their companion—"as the situation seems to present itself."

"You mean Mora doesn't see me, my dear!" Mrs. Traffle replied with spirit.

He met it, however, with a smile and a gallant inclination. "Perhaps I mean that she only unsuccessfully tries to."

"She doesn't then take the right way!" Mora's aunt tossed off.

Mr. Puddick looked at her blandly. "Then you lose a good deal, ma'am. For if you wish to learn from me how much I admire your niece," he continued straight, "I don't in the least mind answering to that that you may put my sentiments at the highest. I *adore* Miss Montravers," he brought out, after a slight catch of his breath, roundly and impatiently. "I'd do anything in the world for her."

"Then do you pretend," said Jane with a rush, as if to break through this opening before she was checked, "then do you pretend that you're living with her in innocence?"

Sidney Traffle had a groan for it—a hunched groan in which he exhaled the anguish, as he would have called it, of his false position; but Walter Puddick only continued, in his fine unblinking way, to meet Jane's eyes. "I repudiate absolutely your charge of my 'living' with her or of her living with me. Miss Montravers is irreproachable and immaculate."

"All appearances to the contrary notwithstanding?" Mrs. Traffle cried. "You'd do anything in the world for her, and she'd by the same token, I suppose, do anything in the world for you, and yet you ask me to believe that, all the while, you are, together, in this extraordinary way, doing nothing in the world—?" With which, to his further excruciation, her husband, with eyes averted from her, felt her face turn, as for a strained and unnatural intensity of meaning, upon himself. "He attempts, dear, to prove too much! But I only desire," she continued to their guest, "that you should definitely understand how far I'm willing to go."

"It *is* rather far you know," Sidney, at this, in spite of everything found himself persuasively remarking to Puddick.

It threw his wife straight upon him, and he felt her there, more massively weighted than he had ever known her, while she said: "I'll make it four hundred and fifty. Yes, a year," she then exaltedly pursued to their visitor. "I pass you my word of honour for it. That's what I'll allow Mora as your wife."

Traffle watched him, under this—and the more that an odd spasm or shade had come into his face; which in turn made our friend wish the more to bridge somehow the dark oddity of their difference. What was all the while at bottom sharpest for him was that they might somehow pull more together. "That, you see," he fluted for conciliation, "is her aunt's really, you know, I think, rather magnificent message for her."

The young man took in clearly, during a short silence, the material magnificence—while Traffle again noted how almost any sort of fineness of appreciation could show in his face. "I'm sure I'm much obliged to you," he presently said.

"You don't refuse to let her have it, I suppose?" Mrs. Traffle further proceeded.

Walter Puddick's clear eyes—clear at least as his host had hitherto judged them—seemed for the minute attached to the square, spacious sum. "I don't refuse anything. I'll give her your message."

"Well," said Jane, "that's the assurance we've wanted." And she gathered herself as for relief, on her own side, at his departure.

He lingered but a moment—which was long enough, however, for her husband to see him, as with an intenser twinge of the special impatience just noted in him, look, all unhappily, from Mora's aunt to Mora's uncle. "Of course I can't mention to her such a fact. But I wish, all the same," he said with a queer sick smile, "that you'd just simply let us alone."

He turned away with it, but Jane had already gone on. "Well, you certainly seem in sufficient possession of the right way to make us!"

Walter Puddick, picking up his hat and with his distinctly artistic and animated young back presented—though how it came to show so strikingly for such Sidney Traffle couldn't have said—reached one of the doors on the room which was not right for his egress; while Sidney stood divided between the motion of correcting and guiding him and the irresistible need of covering Jane with a last woeful reproach. For he had seen something, had caught it from the sharp flicker of trouble finally breaking

through Puddick's face, caught it from the fact that—yes, positively—the upshot of their attack on him was a pair of hot tears in his eyes. They stood for queer, deep things, assuredly, these tears ; they spoke portentously, since that was her note, of wonderful Mora ; but there was an indelicacy in the pressure that had thus made the source of them public. "You *have* dished us now ! " was what, for a Parthian shot, Jane's husband would have liked to leave with her, and what in fact he would have articulately phrased if he hadn't rather given himself to getting their guest with the least discomfort possible out of the room. Into the hall he ushered him, and there—absurd, incoherent person as he had again to know himself for—vaguely yet reassuringly, with an arm about him, patted him on the back. The full force of this victim's original uttered warning came back to him ; the probable perfect wisdom of his plea that, since he had infinitely to manage, *their* line, the aunt's and the uncle's, was just to let him feel his way ; the gage of his sincerity as to this being the fact of his attachment. Sidney Traffle seemed somehow to feel the fullest force of both these truths during the moment his young friend recognised the intention of his gesture ; and thus for a little, at any rate, while the closed door of the drawing-room and the shelter of the porch kept them unseen and unheard from within, they faced each other for the embarrassment that, as Traffle would have been quite ready to put it, they had in common. Their eyes met their eyes, their conscious grin their grin ; hang it, yes, the screw *was* on Mora's lover. Puddick's recognition of his sympathy—well, proved that he needed something, though he didn't need interference from the outside ; which couldn't, any way they might arrange it, seem delicate enough. Jane's obtrusion of her four hundred and fifty affected Traffle thus as singularly gross ; though part of that association might proceed for him, doubtless, from the remark in which his exasperated sensibility was, the next thing, to culminate.

"I'm afraid I can't explain to you," he first said, however, "why it is that in spite of my indoctrination, my wife fails to see that there's only one answer a gentleman may make to the so intimate question she put to you."

"I don't know anything about that ; I wasn't at all making her a conventional reply. But I don't mind assuring you, on my sacred honour——"

So Walter Puddick was going on, but his host, with a firm touch of his arm, and very handsomely, as that host felt, or at least desired to feel, wouldn't have it. "Ah, it's none of my business ; I accept what you've said, and it wouldn't matter to you

if I didn't. Your situation's evidently remarkable," Traffle all sociably added, " and I don't mind telling you that I, for one, have confidence in your tact. I recognised, that day I went to see you, that this was the only thing to do, and have done my best, ever since, to impress it on Mrs. Traffle. She replies to me that I talk at my ease, and the appearances *are* such, I recognise, that it would be odd she shouldn't mind them. In short she has shown you how much she does mind them. I tell her," our friend pursued, " that we mustn't weigh appearances too much against realities—and that *of* those realities," he added, balancing again a little on his toes and clasping his waist with his hands, which at the same time just worked down the back of his waistcoat, " you must be having your full share." Traffle liked, as the effect of this, to see his visitor look at him harder ; he felt how the ideal turn of their relation would be that he should show all the tact he *was* so incontestably showing, and yet at the same time not miss anything that would be interesting. " You see of course for yourself how little, after all, she knows Mora. She doesn't appreciate the light hand that you must have to have with her—and that, I take it," Sidney Traffle smiled, " is what you contend for with us."

" I don't contend for anything with you, sir," said Walter Puddick.

" Ah, but you do want to be let alone," his friend insisted.

The young man turned graver in proportion to this urbanity. " Mrs. Traffle has closed my mouth."

" By laying on you, you mean, the absolute obligation to report her offer—? " That lady's representative continued to smile but then it was that he yet began to see where fine freedom of thought—translated into act at least—would rather grotesquely lodge him. He hung fire, none the less, but for an instant ; even though not quite saying what he had been on the point of. " I should like to feel at liberty to put it to you that if, in your place, I felt that a statement of Mrs. Traffle's overture would probably, or even possibly, dish me, I'm not sure I should make a scruple of holding my tongue about it. But of course I see that I can't very well go so far without looking to you as if my motive might be mixed. You might naturally say that I can't *want* my wife's money to go out of the house."

Puddick had an undissimulated pause for the renewed effort to do justice to so much elegant arrangement of the stiff truth of his case ; but his intelligence apparently operated, and even to the extent of showing him that his companion really meant, more

and more, as well—as well, that is, to *him*—as it was humanly conceivable that Mrs. Traffle's husband *could* mean. "Your difficulty's different from mine, and from the appearance I incur in carrying Miss Montravers her aunt's message as a clear necessity and at any risk."

"You mean that your being conscientious about it may look as if the risk you care least to face is that of not with a little patience coming in yourself for the money?" After which, with a glitter fairly sublime in its profession of his detachment from any stupid course: "You can be sure, you know, that *I'd* be sure——!"

"Sure I'm not a pig?" the young man asked in a manner that made Traffle feel quite possessed at last of his confidence. "Even if you keep quiet I shall know you're not, and shall believe also you won't have thought me one." To which, in the exaltation produced by this, he next added: "Isn't she, with it all—with all she has done for you I mean—splendidly fond of you?"

The question proved, however, but one of those that seemed condemned to cast, by their action, a chill; which was expressed, on the young man's part, with a certain respectful dryness. "How do you know, sir, what Miss Montravers has done for me?"

Sidney Traffle felt himself enjoy, on this, a choice of replies—one of which indeed would have sprung easiest from his lips. "Oh now, come!" seemed for the instant what he would have liked most to hear himself say; but he renounced the pleasure—even though making up for it a little by his actual first choice. "Don't I know at least that she left the honourable shelter of this house for you?"

Walter Puddick had a wait. "I never asked it of her."

"You didn't seduce her, no—and even her aunt doesn't accuse you of it. But that she should have given up—well, what she *has* given up, moderately as you may estimate it," Traffle again smiled—"surely has *something* to say about her case?"

"What has more to say than anything else," Puddick promptly returned to this, "is that she's the very cleverest and most original and most endowed, and in every way most wonderful, person I've known in all my life."

His entertainer fairly glowed, for response, with the light of it. "Thank you then!" Traffle thus radiated.

"'Thank you for nothing!'" cried the other with a short laugh and set into motion down the steps and the garden walk, by this final attestation of the essential impenetrability even of

an acutest young artist's *vie intime* with a character sketchable in such terms.

Traffle accompanied him to the gate, but wondering, as they went, if it was quite inevitable one should come back to feeling, as the result of every sort of brush with people who were really living, like so very small a boy. No, no, one must stretch to one's tallest again. It restored one's stature a little then that one didn't now mind that this demonstration would prove to Jane, should she be waiting in the drawing-room and watching for one's return, that one had detained their guest for so much privacy in the porch. "Well, take care what you do!" Traffle bravely brought out for good-bye.

"Oh, I shall tell her," Puddick replied under the effect of his renewed pat of the back; and even, standing there an instant, had a further indulgence. "She loathes my unfortunate name of course; but she's such an incalculable creature that my information possibly may fetch her."

There was a final suddenness of candour in it that made Traffle gape. "Oh, our names, and hers—! But is her loathing of yours then all that's the matter?"

Walter Puddick stood some seconds; he might, in pursuance of what had just passed, have been going to say things. But he had decided again the next moment for the fewest possible. "No!" he tossed back as he walked off.

(*To be continued*)

The Almond Tree

By Walter de la Mare

My old friend, " the Count " as we used to call him, made very strange acquaintances at times. Let but a man have plausibility, a point of view, a crotchet, an enthusiasm, he would find in him an eager and exhilarating listener. And though he was often deceived and disappointed in his finds, the Count had a heart proof against lasting disillusionment. I confess, however, that these planetary cronies of his were rather disconcerting at times. And I own that meeting him one afternoon in the busy High Street, with a companion on his arm even more than usually voluble and odd—I own I crossed the road to avoid meeting the pair.

But the Count's eyes had been too sharp for me. He twitted me unmercifully with my priggishness. " I am afraid we must have appeared to avoid you to-day," he said ; and received my protestations with contemptuous indifference.

But the next afternoon we took a walk together over the heath ; and perhaps the sunshine, something in the first freshness of the May weather, reminded him of bygone days.

" You remember that rather out-of-the-world friend of mine yesterday that so shocked your spruce proprieties, Richard ? Well, I'll tell you a story."

As closely as I can recall this story of the Count's childhood I have here related it. I wish, though, I had my old friend's gift for such things ; then, perhaps, his story might retain something of the charm in the reading which he gave to it in the telling. Perhaps that charm lies wholly in the memory of his voice, his companionship, his friendship. To revive these, what task would be a burden ? . . .

" The house of my first remembrance, the house that to my last hour on earth will seem home to me, stood in a small green hollow on the verge of a wide heath. Its five upper windows faced far eastwards towards the weather-cocked tower of a village which rambled down the steep inclination of a hill. And, walking in its green old garden—ah, Richard, the crocuses, the

wallflowers, the violets !—you could see in the evening the standing fields of corn, and the dark furrows where the evening star was stationed ; and a little to the south, upon a crest, a rambling wood of fir-trees and bracken.

"The house, the garden, the deep quiet orchard, all had been a wedding gift to my mother from a great-aunt—a very old lady in a kind of turban, whose shrewd eyes used to watch me out of her picture sitting in my high cane chair at meal-times, with not a little keenness ; sometimes, I fancied, with a faint derision. Here passed by, to the singing of the lark, and the lamentation of autumn wind and rain, those first long nine of all these heaped-up inextricable years. Even now, my heart leaps up with longing to see again with those untutored eyes the lofty clouds of evening ; to hear again as then I heard it the two small notes of the yellow-hammer piping from his green spray. I remember every room of the old house, the steep stairs, the cool apple-scented pantry ; I remember the cobbles by the scullery, the well, my old dead raven, the bleak and whistling elms ; but best of all I remember the unmeasured splendour of the heath, with its gorse, and its deep canopy of sunny air, the haven of every wild bird of the morning.

"Martha Rodd was a mere prim snippet of a maid then, pale and grave, with large contemplative, Puritan eyes. Mrs. Ryder, in her stiff blue martial print and twisted gold brooch, was cook. And besides these, there was only old Thomas the gardener (as out-of-doors, and as distantly seen a creature as a dryad) ; my mother ; and that busy-minded little boy, agog in wits and stomach and spirit—myself. For my father seemed but a familiar guest in the house, a guest ever eagerly desired and welcome, but none too eager to remain. He was a dark man with grey eyes and a long chin ; a face unusually impassive, unusually mobile. Just as his capricious mood suggested, our little household was dejected or wildly gay. I never shall forget the spirit of delight he could conjure up at a whim, when my mother would go singing up and down stairs, and in her tiny parlour ; and Martha in perfect content prattle endlessly on to the cook, basting the twirling sirloin, while I watched in the firelight. And the long summer evenings too, when my father would find a secret, a magic, a mystery in everything ; and we would sit together in the orchard while he told me tales, with the small green apples overhead, and beyond contorted branches the first golden twilight of the moon.

"It's an old picture now, Richard, but true to the time.

"My father's will, his word, his caprice, his frown, these

were the tables of the law in that small household. To my mother he was the very meaning of her life. Only that little boy was in some wise independent, busy, inquisitive, docile, sedate; though urged to a bitterness of secret rebellion at times. In his childhood he experienced such hours of distress as the years do not in mercy bring again to a heart that may analyse as well as remember. Yet there also has sunk to rest the fountain of life's happiness. In among the gorse bushes were the green mansions of the fairies; along the furrows before his adventurous eyes stumbled crooked gnomes, hopped bewitched robins. Ariel trebled in the sunbeams and glanced from the dewdrops; and he heard the echo of distant and magic waters in the falling of the rain.

"But my father was never long at peace in the house. Nothing satisfied him; he must needs be at an extreme. And if he was compelled to conceal his discontent, there was something so bitter and imperious in his silence, so scornful a sarcasm in his speech that we could scarcely bear it. And the knowledge of the influence he had over us served only at such times to sharpen his contempt.

"I remember one summer's evening we had been gathering strawberries. I carried a little wicker basket, and went rummaging under the aromatic leaves, calling ever and again my mother to see the 'tremenjous' berry I had found. Martha was busy beside me, vexed that her two hands could not serve her master quick enough. And in a wild race with my mother my father helped us pick. At every ripest one he took her in his arms to force it between her lips; and of all those pecked by the birds he made a rhymed offering to Pan. And when the sun had descended behind the hill, and the clamour of the rooks had begun to wane in the elm-tops, he took my mother on his arm, and we trooped all together up the long straggling path, and across the grass, carrying our spoil of fruit into the cool dusky corridor. As we passed into the gloaming I saw my mother stoop impulsively and kiss his arm. He brushed off her hand impatiently, and went into his study. I heard the door shut. A moment afterwards he called for candles. And, looking on those two other faces in the twilight, I knew with the intuition of childhood that he was suddenly sick to death of us all; and I knew that my mother shared my intuition. She sat down, and I beside her, in her little parlour, and took up her sewing. But her face had lost again all its girlishness as she bent her head over the white linen.

"I think she was happier when my father was away; for

then, free from anxiety to be for ever pleasing his variable moods, she could entertain herself with hopes and preparations for his return. There was a little green summer-house, or arbour, in the garden, where she would sit alone, while the swallows coursed in the evening air. Sometimes too, she would take me for a long walk, listening distantly to my chatter, only, I think that she might entertain the pleasure of supposing that my father might have returned home unforeseen, and be even now waiting to greet us. But these fancies would forsake her. She would speak harshly and coldly to me, and scold Martha for her owlishness, and find nothing but vanity and mockery in all that but a little while since had been her day-dream.

" I think she rarely knew where my father stayed in his long absences from home. He would remain with us for a week, and neglect us for a month. She was too proud, and when he was himself, too happy and hopeful to question him, and he seemed to delight in keeping his affairs secret from her. Indeed, he sometimes appeared to pretend a mystery where none was, and to endeavour in all things to make his character and conduct appear quixotic and inexplicable.

" So we went on. Yet, it seemed, as each month passed by the house was not so merry and happy as before ; something was fading and vanishing that would not return ; estrangement had pierced a little deeper. I think care at last put out of my mother's mind even the resemblance of her former gaiety. She sealed up her heart lest love should break forth anew into the bleakness.

" On Guy Fawkes' day Martha told me at bedtime that a new household had moved into the village on the other side of the heath. After that my father stayed away from us but seldom.

" At first my mother showed her pleasure in a thousand ways, with dainties of her own fancy and cooking, with ribbons in her dark hair, with new songs (though she had but a small thin voice). She read to please him ; and tired my legs out in useless errands in his service. And a word of praise sufficed her for many hours of difficulty. But bye-and-bye, when evening after evening was spent by my father away from home, she began to be uneasy and depressed ; and though she made no complaint, her anxious face, the incessant interrogation of her eyes vexed and irritated him beyond measure.

" ' Where does my father go after dinner ? ' I asked Martha one night, when my mother was in my bedroom, folding my clothes.

"'How dare you ask such a question?' said my mother, 'and how dare you talk to the child about your master's comings and goings!'

"'But where does he?' I repeated to Martha, when my mother was gone out of the room.

"'Hush now, Master Nicholas,' she answered, 'didn't you hear what your mamma said? She's vexed, poor lady, at master's never spending a whole day at home, but nothing but cards, cards, cards, every night at Mr. Grey's. Why, often it's twelve and one in the morning when I've heard his foot on the gravel beneath the window. But there, dear lady, she doesn't mean to speak unkindly. It's a terrible scourge is jealousy, Master Nicholas; and not generous or manly to give it cause. Mrs. Ryder was kept a widow all along of jealousy, and but a week before her wedding with her second.'

"'But why is mother jealous of my father playing cards?'

"Martha slipped my nightgown over my head. 'Ssh, Master Nicholas, little boys mustn't ask so many questions. And I hope when you are grown up to be a man, my dear, you will be a comfort to your mother. She needs it, poor soul, and sakes alive, just now of all times!' I looked inquisitively into Martha's face; but she screened my eyes with her hand; and instead of further questions, I said my prayers to her.

"A few days after this I was sitting with my mother in her parlour, holding her grey worsted for her to wind, when my father entered the room and bade me put on my hat and muffler. 'He is going to pay a call with me,' he explained curtly. As I went out of the room I heard my mother's question, 'To your friends at the Grange, I suppose?'

"'You may suppose whatever you please,' he answered. I heard my mother rise to leave the room, but he called her back and the door was shut . . .

"The room in which the card-players sat was very low-ceiled. A piano stood near the window, a rosewood table with a fine dark crimson work-basket upon it by the fireside, and some little distance away, a green card-table with candles burning. Mr. Grey was a slim, elegant man, with a high, narrow forehead and long fingers. Major Aubrey was a short, red-faced, rather taciturn man. There was also a younger man with fair hair. They seemed to be on the best of terms together; and I helped to pack the cards and to pile the silver coins, sipping a glass of sherry with Mr. Grey. My father said little, paying me no attention, but playing gravely with a very slight frown.

"After some little while the door opened, and a lady

appeared. This was Mr. Grey's sister, Jane, I learned. She seated herself at her work-table, and drew me to her side.

"'Well, so this is Nicholas!' she said. 'Or is it Nick?'

"'Nicholas,' I said.

"'Of course,' she said, smiling, 'and I like that too, much the best. How very kind of you to come to see me. It was to keep *me* company, you know, because I am very stupid at games, but I love talking, do you?'

"I looked into her eyes, and knew we were friends. She smiled again, with open lips, and touched my mouth with her thimble. 'Now, let me see, business first, and—me afterwards. You see I have three different kinds of cakes, because, I thought, I cannot in the least tell which kind he'll like best. Could I now? Come, you shall choose.'

"She rose and opened the long door of a narrow cupboard, looking towards the card-players as she stooped. I remember the cakes to this day; little oval shortbreads stamped with a beehive, custards and mince-pies; and a great glass jar of goodies which I carried in both arms round the little square table. I took a mince-pie, and sat down on a footstool near by Miss Grey, and she talked to me while she worked with slender hands at her lace embroidery. I told her how old I was; about my great-aunt and her three cats. I told her my dreams, and that I was very fond of Yorkshire pudding, 'from under the meat, you know.' And I told her I thought my father the handsomest man I had ever seen.

"'What, handsomer than Mr. Spencer?' she said laughing, looking along her needle.

"I answered that I did not very much like clergymen.

"'And why?' she said gravely.

"'Because they do not talk like real,' I said.

"She laughed very gaily. 'Do men ever?' she said.

"And her voice was so quiet and so musical, her neck so graceful, I thought her a very beautiful lady, admiring especially her dark eyes when she smiled brightly and yet half sadly at me; I promised, moreover, that if she would meet me on the heath, I would show her the rabbit warren and the 'Miller's Pool.'

"'Well, Jane, and what do you think of my son?' said my father when we were about to leave.

"She bent over me and squeezed a lucky fourpenny-piece into my hand. 'I love fourpence, pretty little fourpence, I love fourpence better than my life,' she whispered into my ear. 'But that's a secret,' she added, glancing up over her shoulder. She kissed lightly the top of my head. I was looking at my

father while she was caressing me, and I fancied a faint sneer passed over his face. But when we had come out of the village on to the heath, in the bare keen night, as we walked along the path together between the gorse-bushes, now on turf, and now on stony ground, never before had my father seemed so wonderful a companion. He told me little stories; he began a hundred, and finished none; yet with the stars above us, they seemed a string of beads all of bright colours. We stood still in the vast darkness, while he whistled that strangest of all old songs—'the Song the Sirens sang.' He pilfered my wits and talked like my double. But when—how much too quickly, I thought with sinking heart—we were come to the house-gates, he suddenly fell silent, turned an instant, and stared far away over the windy heath.

"'How weary, stale, flat——' he began, and broke off between uneasy laughter and a sigh. 'Listen to me, Nicholas,' he said, lifting my face to the starlight, 'you must grow up a man—a Man, you understand; no vapourings, no posings, no caprices; and above all, no sham, no sham. It's your one and only chance in this unfaltering Scheme.' He scanned my face long and closely. 'You have your mother's eyes,' he said musingly. 'And that,' he added under his breath, 'that's no joke.' He pushed open the squealing gate, and we went in.

"My mother was sitting in a low chair before a dying and cheerless fire.

"'Well, Nick," she said very suavely, 'and how have you enjoyed your evening?'

"I stared at her without answer. 'Did you play cards with the gentlemen; or did you turn over the music?'

"'I talked to Miss Grey,' I said.

"'Really,' said my mother, raising her eyebrows, 'and who then is Miss Grey?' My father was smiling at us with sparkling eyes.

"'Mr. Grey's sister,' I answered in a low voice.

"'Not his wife, then?' said my mother, glancing furtively at the fire. I looked towards my father in doubt, but could lift my eyes no higher than his knees.

"'You little fool!' he said to my mother with a laugh, 'what a sharpshooter! Never mind, Sir Nick; there, run off to bed, my man.'

"My mother caught me roughly by the sleeve as I was passing her chair. 'Aren't you going to kiss me good-night, then?' she said furiously, her narrow under-lip quivering, 'you too!' I kissed her cheek. 'That's right, my dear,' she

said scornfully, 'that's how little fishes kiss.' She rose and drew back her skirts. 'I refuse to stay in the room, sir,' she said haughtily, and with a sob she hurried out.

"My father continued to smile, but only a smile it seemed gravity had forgotten to smoothe away. He stood very still, so still that I grew afraid he must certainly hear me thinking. Then with a kind of sigh he sat down at my mother's writing-table, and scribbled a few words with his pencil on a slip of paper.

"'There, Nicholas, just tap at your mother's door with that. Good-night, old fellow'; he took my hand and smiled down into my eyes with a kind of generous dark appeal that called me straight to his side. I hastened conceitedly upstairs, and delivered my message. My mother was crying when she opened the door.

"'Well?' she said in a low, trembling voice.

"But presently afterwards, while I was still lingering in the dark corridor, I heard her run down quickly, and in a while my father and mother came upstairs together, arm in arm, and by her light talk and laughter you might suppose she had no knowledge of care or trouble at all.

"Never afterwards did I see so much gaiety and youthfulness in my mother's face as when she sat next morning with us at breakfast. The honeycomb, the small bronze chrysanthemums, her yellow gown seemed dainty as a miniature. With every word her eyes would glance covertly at my father; her smile, as it were, hesitating beneath her lashes. She was so light and girlish and so versatile I should scarcely have recognised the weary and sallow face of the night before. My father seemed to find as much pleasure, or relief, in her good spirits as I did; and to delight in exercising his ingenuity to quicken her humour. It was but a transient morning of sunshine, however, and as the brief, and sombre day waned, its gloom pervaded the house. In the evening my father left us to our solitude as usual. And that night was very misty over the heath, with a small, warm rain falling.

"So it happened that I began to be left more and more to my own devices, and grew so inured at last to my own narrow company and small thoughts and cares, that I began to look on my mother's unhappiness almost with indifference, and learned to criticise almost before I had learned to pity. And so I do not think I enjoyed Christmas very much the less, although my father was away from home and all our little festivities were dispirited. I had plenty of good things to eat, and presents, and a picture book from Martha. I had a new rocking-horse—how changeless

and impassive its mottled battered face looks out at me across the years! It was brisk, clear weather, and on St. Stephen's day I went to see if there was any ice yet on the Miller's Pool.

"I was stooping down at the extreme edge of the pool, snapping the brittle splinters of the ice with my finger, when I heard a voice calling me in the still air. It was Jane Grey, walking on the heath with my father who had called me, having seen me from a distance stooping beside the water.

"'So you see I have kept my promise,' she said, taking my hand.

"'But you promised to come by yourself,' I said.

"'Well, so I will then,' she answered, nodding her head. 'Good-bye,' she added, turning to my father. 'It's three's none, you see. Nicholas shall take me home to tea, and you can call for him in the evening, if you will; that is, if you are coming.'

"'Are you asking me to come?' he said moodily, 'do you care whether I come or no?'

"She lifted her face and spoke gravely. 'You are my friend,' she said, 'of course I care whether you are with me or not.' He scrutinised her through half-closed lids. His face was haggard, gloomy with *ennui*. 'How you harp on the word, you punctilious Jane. Do you suppose I am still in my teens? Twenty years ago, now—— It amuses me to hear you women talk. It's little you ever really feel.'

"'I don't think I am quite without feeling,' she replied, 'you are a little difficult, you know.'

"'"Difficult"' he echoed in derision. He checked himself and shrugged his shoulders. 'You see, Jane, it's all on the surface; I boast of my indifference. It's the one rag of philosophy age denies no one. It is so easy to be heroic—debonair, iron-grey, fluent, dramatic—you know its captivation, perhaps? But after all, life's comedy, when one stops smiling, is only the tepidest farce. Or the gilt wears off and the pinchbeck tragedy shows through. And so, as I say, we talk on, being past feeling. One by one our hopes come home to roost, our delusions find themselves out, and the mystery proves to be nothing but sleight-of-hand. It's age, my dear Jane Grey; it turns one to stone. With you young people life's a dream; ask Nicholas here!' He shrugged his shoulders, adding under his breath, 'but one wakes on a devilish hard pallet.'

"'Of course,' said Jane slowly, 'you are only talking cleverly, and then it does not matter whether it's true or not, I suppose. I can't say. I don't think you mean it, and so it comes to

nothing. I can't and won't believe you feel so little, I can't.' She continued to smile, yet I fancied, with the brightness of tears in her eyes. 'It's all mockery and make-believe; we are not the miserable slaves of time you try to fancy. There must be some way to win through.' She turned away, then added slowly, 'You ask me to be fearless, sincere, to speak my heart; I wonder, do you?'

"My father did not look at her, appeared not to have seen the hand she had half held out to him, and as swiftly withdrawn. 'The truth is, Jane,' he said slowly, 'I am past sincerity now. And as for "heart," it is a quite discredited organ at forty. Life, thought, selfishness, egotism, call it what you will; they have all done their worst with me; and I really haven't the sentiment to pretend that they haven't. And when bright youth and sentiment are gone, why, go too, dear lady! Existence proves nothing but brazen inanity afterwards. But there's always that turning left to the dullest and dustiest road—oblivion.' He remained silent a moment. Silence deep and strange lay all around us. The air was still, the wintry sky unutterably calm. And again that low dispassionate voice continued: 'It's only when right seems too easy a thing, too trivial, and not worth the doing; and wrong a foolish thing—too dull . . there, take care of her, Nicholas; take care of her, "snips and snails," you know. Au revoir, 'pon my word, I almost wish it was good-bye.'

"Jane Grey regarded him attentively. 'So then do I,' she replied in a low voice, 'for I shall never understand you; perhaps I should hate to understand you.'

"My father turned with an affected laugh, and left us.

"Miss Grey and I walked slowly along beside the frosty bulrushes until we came to the wood. The bracken and heather all were faded. The earth was dark and rich with autumn rains. Fir-cones lay on the moss beneath the dark green branches. It was all now utterly silent in the winter afternoon. Far away arose tardily, and alighted, the hoarse crows upon the ploughed earth; high in the pale sky passed some few on ragged wing.

"'What does my father mean by wishing it was good-bye?' I said.

But my companion did not answer me in words. She clasped my hand; she seemed very slim and gracious walking by my side on the hardened ground. My mother was small now and awkward beside her in my imagination. I questioned her about the ice, about the red sky, and if there was any mistletoe in the

woods. Sometimes she, in turn, asked me questions too, and when I answered them we would look at each other and smile, and it seemed it was with her as it was with me—of the pure gladness I found in her company. In the middle of our walk to The Thorns she bent down in the cold twilight, and putting her hands on my shoulders, 'My dear, dear Nicholas,' she said, 'you must be a good son to your mother—brave and kind; will you?'

"'He hardly ever speaks to mother now,' I answered instinctively.

"She pressed her lips to my cheek, and her cheek was cold against mine, and she clasped her arms about me. 'Kiss me,' she said, 'we must do our best, mustn't we?' she pleaded, still holding me. I looked mournfully into the gathering darkness. 'That's easy when you're grown up,' I said. She laughed and kissed me again, and then we took hands and ran till we were out of breath, towards the distant lights of The Thorns . . .

"I had been some time in bed, lying awake in the warmth, when my mother came softly through the darkness into my room. She sat down at the bedside, breathing hurriedly. 'Where have you been all the evening?' she said.

"'Miss Grey asked me to stay to tea,' I answered.

"'Did I give you permission to go to tea with Miss Grey?'

"I made no answer.

"'If you go to that house again, I shall beat you. You hear me, Nicholas? Alone, or with your father, if you go there again, without my permission, I shall beat you. You have not been whipped for a long time, have you?' I could not see her face, but her head was bent towards me in the dark, as she sat—almost crouched—on my bedside.

"I made no answer. But when my mother had gone, without kissing me, I cried noiselessly on into my pillow. Something had suddenly flown out of memory, never to sing again. Life had become a little colder and stranger. I had always been my own chief company; now another sentimental barrier had arisen between the world and me, past its heedlessness, past my understanding to break down.

"Hardly a week passed now without some bitter quarrel. I seemed ever to be stealing out of sound of angry voices; ever fearful of being made the butt of my father's serene taunts, of my mother's passions and desperate remorse. He disdained to defend himself against her, never reasoned with her; he merely shrugged his shoulders, denied her charges, ignored her anger; coldly endeavouring only to show his indifference, to

conceal by every means in his power his own inward weariness and vexation. I saw this, of course, only vaguely, yet with all a child's certainty of insight, though I rarely knew the cause of my misery; and I continued to love them both in my selfish fashion, not a whit the less.

"At last on St. Valentine's Day, things came to a worse pass than before. It had always been my father's custom to hang my mother a valentine on the handle of her little parlour door, a string of pearls, a fan, a book of poetry, whatever it might be. She came down early this morning, and sat in the window-seat, looking out at the falling snow. She said nothing at breakfast, only feigned to eat, lifting her eyes at intervals to glance at my father with a strange intensity, as if of hatred, tapping her foot on the floor. He took no notice of her, sat quiet and moody with his own thoughts. I think he had not really forgotten the day, for I found long afterwards in his old bureau a bracelet purchased but a week before with her name written on a scrap of paper, inside the case. Yet it seemed to be the absence of this little gift that had driven my mother beyond reason.

"Towards evening, tired of the house, tired of being alone, I went out and played awhile listlessly in the snow. At nightfall I went in; and in the dark heard angry voices. My father came out of the dining-room and looked at me in silence, standing in the gloom of the wintry dusk. My mother followed him. I can see her now, leaning in the doorway white with rage, her eyes ringed and darkened with continuous trouble, her hand trembling.

"'It shall learn to hate you,' she cried in a low, dull voice. 'I will teach it every moment to hate and despise you as I—— Oh, I hate and despise you."

"My father looked at her calmly and profoundly before replying. He took up a cloth hat and brushed it with his hand. "Very well then, you have chosen," he said coldly. "It has always lain with you. You have exaggerated, you have raved, and now you have said what can never be recalled or forgotten. Here's Nicholas. Pray do not imagine, however, that I am defending myself. I have nothing to defend. I think of no one but myself—no one. Endeavour to understand me, no one. Perhaps, indeed, you yourself—no more than . . . but words again . . . the dull old round!' He made a peculiar gesture with his hand. 'Well, life is . . . ach! I have done. So be it.' He stood looking out of the door. 'You see, it's snowing,' he said, as if to himself.

"All the long night before and all day long snow had been

falling continuously. The air was wintry and cold. I could discern nothing beyond the porch but a gloomy accumulation of cloud in the twilight air; darkened with the labyrinthine motion of the snow. My father glanced back for an instant into the house, and, as I fancy, regarded me with a kind of strange, close earnestness. But he went out and his footsteps were instantly silenced.

"My mother peered at me in terrible perplexity, her eyes wide with terror and remorse. 'What, what?' she said. I stared at her stupidly. Three snowflakes swiftly and airily floated together into the dim hall from the gloom without. She clasped her hand over her mouth. Overburdened her fingers seemed to be, so slender were they, with her many rings.

"'Nicholas, Nicholas, tell me; what was I saying? What was I saying?' She stumbled hastily to the door. 'Arthur, Arthur,' she cried from the porch, 'it's St. Valentine's Day, that was all I meant; come back, come back!' But perhaps my father was already out of hearing; I do not think he made any reply.

"My mother came in doubtfully, resting her hand on the wall. And she walked very slowly and laboriously upstairs. While I was standing at the foot of the staircase, looking out across the hall into the evening, Martha climbed primly up from the kitchen with her lighted taper, shut-to the door and lit the hall lamp. Already the good smell of the feast cooking floated up from the kitchen, and gladdened my spirits. 'Will he come back?' Martha said, looking very scared in the light of her taper. ''Tis such a fall of snow, already it's a hand's breadth on the window-sill. Oh, Master Nicholas, it's a hard world for us women.' She followed my mother upstairs, carrying light to all the gloomy upper chambers.

"I sat down in the window-seat of the dining room, and read in my picture book as well as I could by the flame-light. By-and-by, Martha returned to lay the table.

"As far back as brief memory carried me, it had been our custom to make a Valentine's feast on the Saint's day. This was my father's mother's birthday also. When she was alive I well remember her visiting us with her companion, Miss Schreiner, who talked in such good-humoured English to me. This same anniversary had last year brought about a tender reconciliation between my father and mother, after a quarrel that meant how little then. And I remember on this day to have seen the first fast-sealed buds upon the almond-tree. We would have a great spangled cake in the middle of the table, with marzipan

and comfits, just as at Christmastide. And when Mrs. Merry lived in the village her little fair daughters used to come in a big carriage to spend the evening with us and to share my Valentine's feast.

" But all this was changed now. My wits were sharper, but I was none the less only the duller for that; my hopes and dreams had a little fallen and faded. I looked idly at my picture book, vaguely conscious that its colours pleased me less than once upon a time; that I was rather tired of seeing them, and they just as tired of seeing me. And yet I had nothing else to do, so I must still go on with hard face, turning listlessly the linen pages.

" About seven o'clock my mother sent for me. I found her sitting in her bedroom. Candles were burning before the looking-glass. She was already dressed in her handsome black silk gown, and wearing her pearl necklace. She began to brush my hair, curling its longer ends with her fingers, which she moistened in the pink bowl that was one of the first things I had set eyes on in this world. She put me on a clean blouse and my buckle shoes, talking to me the while, almost as if she were telling me a story. Then she looked at herself long and earnestly in the glass; throwing up her chin with a smile, as was a habit of hers in talk. I wandered about the room, fingering the little toilet-boxes and nicknacks on the table. By mischance I upset one of these, a scent-bottle that held rose-water. The water ran out and filled the warm air with its fragrance. 'You foolish, clumsy boy!' said my mother and slapped my hand. More of vexation and tiredness than because of the pain I began to cry. And then, with infinite tenderness, she leaned her head on my shoulder. 'Mother can't think very well just now,' she said; and cried so bitterly in silence that I was only too ready to extricate myself and run away when her hold on me relaxed.

" I climbed slowly upstairs to Martha's bedroom and kneeling on a cane chair looked out of the window. The flakes had ceased to fall now, although the snowy heath was encompassed in mist; above the snow the clouds had parted, drifting from beneath the stars, and these in their constellations were trembling very brightly, and here and there burned one of them in solitude larger and wilder in its shining than the rest. But though I did not tire of looking out of the window, my knees began to ache; and the little room was very cold and still so near the roof. So I went down to the dining-room, with all its seven candlesticks kindled, seeming to my unaccustomed eyes a very splendid

blaze out of the dark. My mother was kneeling on the rug by the fireside. She looked very small, even dwarfish, I thought. She was gazing into the flames; one shoe curved beneath the hem of her gown, her chin resting on her hand.

"I surveyed the table with its jellies and sweetmeats and glasses and fruit, and began to be very hungry, so savoury was the smell of the turkey roasting downstairs. Martha knocked at the door when the clock had struck eight.

"'Dinner is ready, M'm.'

"My mother glanced fleetingly at the clock. 'Just a little, only a very little while longer, tell Mrs. Ryder; your master will be home in a minute.' She rose and placed the claret in the hearth at some distance from the fire.

"'Is it nicer warm, mother?' I said. She looked at me with startled eyes and nodded. 'Did you hear anything, Nicholas? Run to the door and listen; was that a sound of footsteps?'

"I opened the outer door and peered into the darkness; but it seemed the world ended here with the warmth and the light: beyond could extend only winter and silence, a region that, familiar though it was to me, seemed now to terrify me like the sea in solitude.

"'It's stopped snowing,' I said, 'but there isn't anybody there; nobody at all, mother.'

"The hours passed heavily from quarter on to quarter. The turkey, I grieved to hear, was to be taken out of the oven, and put away to cool in the pantry. I was bidden take what I pleased of the trembling jellies, and delicious pink blanc-mange. Already midnight would be the next hour to be chimed. I felt sick yet was still hungry and very tired. The candles began to burn low. 'Leave me a little light here then,' my mother said at last to Martha, 'and go to bed. Perhaps your master has missed his way home in the snow.' But Mrs. Ryder had followed Martha into the room.

'You must pardon my interference, Ma'am, but it isn't right, it isn't really right of you to sit up longer. Master will not come back, maybe, before morning. And I shouldn't be doing my bounden duty, Ma'am, except I spoke my mind. Just now too, of all times.'

"'Thank you very much, Mrs. Ryder,' my mother answered simply, 'but I would prefer not to go to bed yet. It's very lonely on the heath at night. But I shall not want anything else, thank you.'

"'Well, ma'am, I've had my say, and done my conscience'

bidding. And I have brought you up this tumbler of mulled wine; else, ma'am, you'll be sinking away or something with the fatigue.'

"My mother took the wine, sipped of it with a wan smile at Mrs. Ryder over the brim; and Mrs. Ryder retired with Martha. I don't think they had noticed me sitting close in the shadow on my stool beside the table. But all through that long night, I fancy, these good souls took it in turn to creep down stealthily and look in on us; and in the small hours of the morning, when the fire had fallen low, they must have wrapped us both warm in shawls. They left me then, I think, to be my mother's company. Indeed, I remember we spoke in the darkness, and she took my hand.

"My mother and I shared the steaming wine together when they were gone; our shadows looming faintly huge upon the ceiling. We said very little, but I looked softly into her grey childish eyes, and we kissed one another kneeling there together before the fire. And afterwards, I jigged softly round the table, pilfering whatever sweet or savoury mouthful took my fancy. But by-and-by in the silent house—a silence broken only by the fluttering of the flames, and the odd far-away stir of the frost, drowsiness vanquished me; I sat down by the fireside, leaning my head on a chair. And sitting thus, vaguely eyeing firelight and wavering shadow, I began to nod, and very soon dream stalked in, mingling with reality.

"It was early morning when I awoke, dazed and cold and miserable in my uncomfortable resting-place. The rare odour of frost was on the air. The ashes of the fire lay iron grey upon the cold hearth. An intensely clear white ray of light leaned up through a cranny of the shutters to the cornice of the ceiling. I got up with difficulty. My mother was still asleep, breathing heavily, and as I stooped, regarding her curiously, I could almost watch her transient dreams fleeting over her face; and now she smiled faintly; and now she raised her eyebrows as if in some playful and happy talk with my father; then again utterly still darkness would descend on brow and lid and lip.

"I touched her sleeve, suddenly conscious of my loneliness in the large house. Her face clouded instantly; she sighed profoundly: 'What?' she said, 'nothing, nothing.' She stretched out her hand towards me; the lids drew back from eyes still blind from sleep. But gradually time regained its influence over her. She moistened her lips and turned to me, and suddenly, in a gush of agony, remembrance of the night returned to her. She hid her face in her hands, rocking her

body gently to and fro ; then rose and smoothed back her hair at the looking-glass. I was surprised to see no trace of tears on her cheeks. Her lips moved, as if unconsciously a heart worn out with grief addressed that pale reflection of her sorrow in the glass. I took hold of the hand that hung down listlessly on her silk skirt, and fondled it, kissing punctiliously each loose ring in turn.

" But I do not think she heeded my kisses. So I returned to the table on which was still set out the mockery of our Valentine feast, strangely disenchanted in the chill dusk of daybreak. I put a handful of wine biscuits, and a broken piece of cake in my pocket ; for a determination had taken me to go out on to the heath. My heart beat thick and fast in imagination of the solitary snow and of myself wandering in loneliness across its untrampled surface. A project also was forming in my mind of walking over to The Thorns ; for somehow I knew my mother would not scold or punish me that day. Perhaps, I thought, my father would be there. And I would tell Miss Grey all about my adventure of the night spent down in the dining-room. So moving very stealthily, and betraying no eagerness, lest I should be forbidden to go, I stole at length unperceived from the room, and leaving the great hall door ajar, ran out joyously into the wintry morning.

" Already dawn was clear and high in the sky ; already the first breezes were moving in the mists, and breathed chill, as if it were the lingering darkness itself on my cheeks. The air was cold yet with a fresh faint sweetness. The snow lay crisp across its perfect surface, mounded softly over the gorse-bushes, though here and there a spray of parched blossom yet protruded from its cowl. Flaky particles of ice floated invisible in the air. I called out with pleasure to see the little ponds where the snow had been blown away from the black ice. I saw on the bushes too the webs of spiders stretched from thorn to thorn, and festooned with crystals of hoar-frost. I turned and counted as far as I could my footsteps leading back to the house, which lay roofed in gloomy pallor, dim and obscured in the darkened west.

" A waning moon that had risen late in the night shone, it seemed, very near to the earth. But every moment light swept invincibly in, pouring its crystal like a river ; and darkness sullenly withdrew into the north. And when at last the sun appeared, glittering along the rosy snow, I turned in an ecstasy and with my finger pointed him out, as if the house I had left behind me might view him with my own delight. Indeed, I saw its windows transmuted, and heard afar a blackbird pealing

in the bare branches of a pear-tree; and a robin startled me, so suddenly shrill and sweet he broke into song from a snowy tuft of gorse.

"I was now come to the beginning of a gradual incline, from the summit of which I should presently descry in the distance the avenue of lindens that led towards the village from the margin of the heath. As I went on my way, munching my biscuits, looking gaily about me, I brooded deliciously on the breakfast which Miss Grey would doubtless sit me down to; and almost forgot the occasion of my errand, and the troubled house I had left behind me. At length I climbed to the top of the smooth ridge and looked down. At a little distance from me grew a crimson hawthorn-tree that often in past Aprils I had used for a green tent from the showers; but now it was closely hooded, darkening with its faint shadow the long expanse of shadowless whiteness. Not very far from this bush I perceived a figure lying stretched along the snow and knew instinctively that this was my father lying here.

"The sight did not then surprise or dismay me. It seemed but the lucid sequel to that long heavy night-watch, to all the troubles and perplexities of the past. I felt no sorrow, but stood beside the body, regarding it only with deep wonder and a kind of earnest curiosity, yet perhaps with a remote pity too, that he could not see me in the beautiful morning. His grey hand lay arched in the snow, his darkened face, on which a thin trickle of blood zigzagged, was turned a little as if out of the oblique sunshine. I understood that he was dead, was already loosely speculating on what changes it would make; how I should spend my time; what would happen in the house now that he was gone, his influence, his authority, his discord. I remembered too that I was alone, was master of this immense secret, that I must go home sedately, as if it were a Sunday, and in a low voice tell my mother, concealing any exultation I might feel in the office. I imagined the questions that would be asked me, and was considering the proper answers to make to them, when my morbid dreams were suddenly broken in on by Martha Rodd. She stood in my footsteps, looking down on me from the ridge from which I had but just now descended. She hastened towards me, stooping a little as if she carried a burden, her mouth ajar, her forehead wrinkled beneath its wispy light brown hair.

"'Look, Martha, look,' I cried, 'I found him in the snow; he's dead.' And suddenly a bond seemed to snap in my heart. The beauty and solitude of the morning, the perfect whiteness

of the snow—it was all an uncouth mockery against me—a subtle and quiet treachery. The tears gushed into my eyes, and in my fear and affliction I clung to the poor girl, sobbing bitterly, protesting my grief, hiding my eyes in terror from that still inscrutable shape. She smoothed my hair with her hand again and again. her eyes fixed ; and then at last, venturing cautiously nearer, she stooped over my father. 'O Master Nicholas,' she said, 'his poor dark hair ! What will we do now ? What will your poor mamma do now, and him gone ? ' She hid her face in her hands, and our tears gushed out anew.

" But my grief was speedily forgotten. The novelty of being left entirely alone, my own master ; to go where I would ; to do as I pleased ; the experience of being pitied most when I least needed it, and then when misery and solitariness came over me like a cloud, of being utterly ignored, turned my thoughts gradually away. My father's body was brought home and laid in my mother's little parlour that looked out on to the garden and the snowy orchard. The house was darkened. I took a secret pleasure in peeping in on the sunless rooms, and stealing from door to door through corridors screened from the daylight. My mother was ill ; and for some inexplicable reason I connected her illness with the bevy of gentlemen dressed in black who came one morning to the house and walked away together over the heath. Finally Mrs. Marshall drove up one afternoon from Islington, and by the bundles she had brought with her and her grained box with the iron handles I knew that she was come, as once before in my experience, to stay.

" I was playing on the morrow in the hall with my leaden soldiers when there came into my mind vaguely the voices of Mrs. Ryder and of Mrs. Marshall gossiping together on their tedious way upstairs from the kitchen.

" ' No, Mrs. Marshall, nothing,' I heard Mrs. Ryder saying, ' not one word, not one word. And now the poor dear lady left quite alone, and only the doctor to gainsay that fatherless mite from facing the idle inquisitive questions of all them strangers. 'Tis neither for me nor you, Mrs. Marshall, to speak out just what comes into our heads here and now. The ways of the Almighty are past understanding—but a kinder at heart than him never trod this earth.'

" ' Ah,' said Mrs. Marshall.

" ' I knew to my sorrow,' continued Mrs. Ryder, ' there was words in the house ; but there, wheresoever you be there's that. Human beings ain't angels, married or single, and in every——'

"'Wasn't there talk of some—— ?' insinuated Mrs. Marshall discreetly.

"'Talk, Mrs. Marshall,' said Mrs. Ryder, coming to a standstill, 'I scorn the word! A pinch of truth in a hogshead of falsehood. I don't gainsay it even. I just shut my ears—there—with the dead.' Mrs. Marshall had opened her mouth to reply when I was discovered, crouched as small as possible at the foot of the stairs.

"'Well, here's pitchers!' said Mrs. Marshall pleasantly. 'And this is the poor fatherless mannikin, I suppose. It's hard on the innocent, Mrs. Ryder, and him grown such a sturdy child too, as I said from the first. Well now, and don't you remember me, little man, don't you remember Mrs. Marshall? He ought to, now!'

"'He's a very good boy in general,' said Mrs. Ryder, 'and I'm sure I hope and pray he'll grow up to be a comfort to his poor widowed mother, if so be . . .' They glanced earnestly at one another, and Mrs. Marshall stooped with a sigh of effort and drew a big leather purse from a big loose pocket under her skirt, and selected a bright ha'penny from among its silver and copper.

"'I make no doubt he will, poor mite,' she said cheerfully; I took the ha'penny in silence and the two women passed slowly upstairs.

"In the afternoon, in order to be beyond call of Martha, I went out on to the heath with a shovel, intent on building a great tomb in the snow. Yet more snow had fallen during the night; it now lay so deep as to cover my socks above my shoes. I laboured very busily, shovelling, beating, moulding, stamping. So intent was I that I did not see Miss Grey until she was close beside me. I looked up from the snow and was surprised to find the sun already set and the low mists of evening approaching. Miss Grey was veiled and dressed in furs to the throat. She drew her ungloved hand from her muff.

"'Nicholas,' she said in a low voice.

"I stood for some reason confused and ashamed without answering her. She sat down on my shapeless mound of snow, and took me by the hand. Then she drew up her veil, and I saw her face pale and darkened, and her dark eyes gravely looking into mine.

"'My poor, poor Nicholas,' she said, and continued to gaze at me with her warm hand clasping mine. 'What can I say? What can I do? Isn't it very, very lonely out here in the snow?'

"'I didn't feel lonely much,' I answered, 'I was making a —I was playing at building.'

"'And am I sitting on your beautiful snow house, then?' she said, smiling sadly, her hand trembling upon mine.

"'It isn't a house,' I answered, turning away.

"She pressed my hand on the furs at her throat. 'Poor cold, blue hands,' she said. 'Do you like playing alone?'

"'I like you being here,' I answered. 'I wish you would come always, or at least, sometimes.'

"She drew me close to her, smiling, and bent and kissed my head.

"'There,' she said, 'I am here now.'

"'Mother's ill,' I said.

"She drew back and looked out over the heath towards the house.

"'They have put my father in her parlour, in his coffin; of course you know he's dead, and Mrs. Marshall's come; she gave me a ha'penny this morning. Dr. Graham gave me a whole crown, though.' I took it out of my breeches pocket and showed it her.

"'That's very, very nice,' she said. 'What lots of nice things you can buy with it. And, look, I am going to give you a little keepsake too, between just you and me.'

"It was a small silver box that she drew out of her muff, and embossed in the silver of the lid was a crucifix. 'I thought, perhaps, I should see you to-day, you know,' she continued softly. 'Now, who's given you this?' she said, putting the box into my hand.

"'You,' I answered softly.

"'And who am I?'

"'Miss Grey,' I said.

"'Your friend, Jane Grey,' she repeated, as if she were fond of her own name. 'Say it now—always my friend, Jane Grey.'

"I repeated it after her.

"'And now,' she continued, 'tell me which room is—is the little parlour. Is it that small window at the corner under the ivy?'

"I shook my head.

"'Which?' she said in a whisper, after a long pause.

"I twisted my shovel in the snow. 'Would you like to see my father?' I said. 'I am sure, you know, Martha would not mind; and mother's in bed.' She started, and looked with quiet, dark eyes into my face. 'Where?' she said, without stirring.

"'It's at the back, a little window that comes out—if you were to come this evening, I would be playing in the hall; I always play in the hall, after tea, if I can; and now, always. Nobody would see you at all, you know.'

"She sighed. 'O what are you saying, child,' she said, and stood up, drawing down her veil.

"'But would you like to?' I repeated. She stooped suddenly, pressing her veiled face to mine. 'I'll come, I'll come,' she said. 'It is my friend—my friend, you understand. We can both still be loyal to him, can't we, Nicholas?'

"She walked away quickly, towards the pool and the little darkened wood. I looked after her and knew that she would be waiting there alone till evening. I looked at my silver box with great satisfaction, and after opening it, put it into my pocket with my crown piece and my ha'penny, and continued my building for awhile.

"But now zest for it was gone; and I began to feel cold, the frost closing in keenly as darkness gathered. So I went home.

"My silence and suspicious avoidance of scrutiny and question passed unnoticed. Indeed, I ate my tea in solitude, except that now and again one or other of the women would come bustling in on some brief errand. A strange suppressed stir was in the house. I wondered what could be the cause of it; and felt a little timid and anxious of my project being discovered.

"None the less I was playing in the evening, as I had promised, close to the door, alert to catch the faintest sign of the coming of my visitor.

"'Run down in the kitchen, dearie,' said Martha. Her cheeks were flushed. She was carrying a big can of steaming water. 'You must keep very quiet this evening, dearie, and go to bed like a good boy, and perhaps to-morrow morning I'll tell you a great, great secret.' She kissed me with hasty rapture. I was not very inquisitive of her secret just then, and eagerly promised to be quite quiet if I might continue to play where I was.

"'Well, very, *very* quiet then, and you mustn't let Mrs. Marshall,' she began, but hurried hastily away in answer to a peremptory summons from upstairs.

"Almost as soon as she was gone I heard a light rap on the door. It seemed that Jane Grey brought in with her the cold and freshness of the woods. I led the way on tiptoe down the narrow corridor and into the small, silent room. The candles burned pure and steadfastly in their brightness. The air was

still and languid with the perfume of flowers. Overhead passed light, heedful footsteps ; but they seemed not a disturbing sound, only a rumour beyond the bounds of silence.

" ' I am very sorry,' I said, ' but they have nailed it down. Martha says the men came this afternoon.'

" Miss Grey took a little bunch of snowdrops from her bosom, and hid them in among the clustered wreaths of flowers ; and she knelt down on the floor, with a little silver cross which she sometimes wore pressed tight to her lips. I felt ill at ease to see her praying, and wished I could go back to my soldiers. But while I watched her, seeing in marvellous brilliancy everything in the little room, and remembering dimly the snow lying beneath the stars in the darkness of the garden, I listened also to the quiet footsteps passing to and fro in the room above. Suddenly, the silence was broken by a small, continuous, angry crying.

" Miss Grey looked up. Her eyes were very clear and wonderful in the candlelight.

" ' What was that ? ' she said faintly, listening.

" I stared at her. The cry welled up anew, piteously, as if of a small remote helpless indignation.

" ' Why, it sounds just like—a little baby,' I said.

" She crossed herself hastily and arose. ' Nicholas ! ' she said in a strange quiet, bewildered voice—yet her face was marvellously bright. She looked at me so lovingly and yet so strangely I wished I had not let her come in.

" She went out as softly as she had entered. I did not so much as peep into the darkness after her, but busy with a hundred thoughts returned to my play.

" Long past my usual bed-time, as I sat sipping a mug of hot milk before the glowing cinders of the kitchen fire, Martha told me her secret . . .

" So my impossible companion in the High Street yesterday was own and only brother to your crazy old friend, Richard," said the Count, " only brother," he added, in a muse.

Les Saltimbanques

By P. Wyndham Lewis

I MET in the evening, not far from the last *débit* of the town, a cart containing all the mingled impedimenta and progeny of a strolling circus troupe from Arles that I had already seen. The cornac and his wife tramped along beside it. Their talk ran on the people of the town they had just left, and they were both scowling.

This couple had a standing grudge against their audiences, in the case of the man superadded to his grievance against fortune for trouble with his health—this last ill complicated alarmingly with laziness. They were very demonstrative with their children on all occasions, giving them mournful caresses—a way of indirectly and publicly pitying themselves. There was something defiant in their affection. They talked to and treated them always as one does a child that has just been ill-used or hurt. As a result the children became extremely morbid and depressed, and the more pathetic kisses they received the more melancholy they became, and seemed in a constant state of gloomy astonishment. They felt that something awful was in the air. When the painted clown made a sinister grimace to amuse them they concluded this must be the sign and beginning of the terrible thing that had so long been covertly menacing them, and their hearts nearly hopped out of their throats for fright. This was the family whose lot it was to dress itself up every day—the first time I saw the proprietress she was standing astride on a raised platform in tights and feathers—and knock each other about and tie their bodies up in knots before an astounded congregation of country people.

The merriment of the public that their unhappy fate compelled them to provoke, was nevertheless a constant source of irritation to these people. Their spirits became sorer and sorer at the recreation and amusement that the public got out of their miserable existence. Its ignorance as to their true sentiments helped to swell their disgust. They looked upon the public as a vast beast, with a very simple but perverse character,

differing from any separate man's, the important trait of which was an insatiable longing for their performances. For what man would ever go *alone* to see their circus, they might have argued ? And as they knew no other means of gaining a livelihood, if they ceased to propitiate it, it would inevitably destroy them. The brute in us always awakens at the contact of a mob of people. When they set up their tent in a town, and opened to its multitudinous form this tabernacle dedicated to " the many-headed beast," they felt their anger gnawing through their reserve, like a dog under lock and key, yet maddened by this other brutal presence. Or their long pilgrimage through this world inhabited by the public, that they could never get free of, would suggest a nightmare image. It was as though they were lost in a land peopled by mastodon and rhinoceri. Whenever they met one of these monsters—which was on an average twice a day—their only means of escape was by charming it with their pipes, which never failed to render it harmless and satisfied. They then would hurry on, until they met another, when they would again play to it and flee away.

The reflection that all these people parted with their sous for so little would be the only bright spot in the gloomy Adrien Brower of their minds. They felt that they were getting the better of them in some way. That the public was paying for an idea, for something that it gave itself, did not occur to them, but that it was paying for the performance as seen and appreciated by them, the performers. For it is most difficult to realise the charm of something we possess. Women find it so hard to look on their own beauty and desirableness as their admirer does, that a great number of their actions might be traced to a contempt for men, who become so passionate and set so much store by what they know themselves to be such an ordinary matter—namely themselves. But in their shallowness they often become incredibly vain and inconceivably self-assured, because they are praised for certain qualities—although these seem to them, when thinking frankly, purely illusory.

A little later on I re-found these folks in the square of the " Basse-Ville " at Quimperlé.

Drawn up under the beeches stood their brake, and near it in the open space they had erected the trapeze, lighted several lamps (it was after dark already) and placed three or four benches in a narrow semicircle. When I arrived, a large crowd already pressed around them. " Fournissons les bancs, Messieurs et M'dames, fournissons les bancs, et alors nous commencons," the proprietor was crying. But the seats remained unoccupied.

A boy in tights, with his coat drawn round him, shivered at one corner of the ring, into the middle of which the showman several times advanced with this exhortation on his lips. He would then walk back, and stand near his cart, muttering to himself. His eyebrows were hidden in a dishevelled frond of hair. The only thing he could look at without effort was the ground, and there his eyes were usually directed. When he looked up they were heavy—vacillating painfully beneath the weight of their lids. The action of speech with him resembled that of swallowing: the dreary pipe from which he drew so many distressful sounds seemed to stiffen and swell, and his head to strain forward like a rooster about to crow. His heavy under-lip went in and out in a sombre activity.

The fine natural resources of his face for inspiring a feeling of gloom in his fellows one would have judged irresistible on that particular night, reinforced by an expression of the bitterest disgust with his audience.

But *they* watched this despondent and unpromising figure with glee and pride. That they did not understand this incongruity of appearance and calling only added the piquancy of something not understood. When he scowled they gaped delightedly; when he coaxed they became grave and sympathetic. All his movements were followed with minute attention. When he called upon them to occupy their seats, with an expressive gesture, they riveted their eyes on his hand as though expecting a pack of cards to suddenly appear there. But they made no move to take their places. Also as this had already lasted a considerable time, the man who was fuming to entertain them —they just as incomprehensible to him as he was to them— allowed the outraged expression that was the expression of his soul to appear more and more in his face.

Doubtless this public had, what I had not, an inspired presentiment of what might shortly be expected of this morose figure. Some rare spirit among them may have gazed on him with the same chuckling exultation that sportsmen do on an athlete whose worth they know, and whose debile or gauche appearance is a constant source of delight to them.

His cheerless voice, that sounded like the moaning bay of solitary dogs, conjured them to occupy the seats, and again he retired. This time the exhortation had been pitched in as formal and matter-of-fact a key as his peculiar anatomy would permit, as though this were the first appeal of the evening. And now he seemed merely waiting, without even troubling to glance in their direction, until the audience should have had time to

seat themselves, absorbed in briefly rehearsing to himself, just before beginning, the part he was to play. But these tactics did not alter things a whit. At last he was compelled to take note of his failure : no words more issued from his mouth. He glared stupidly for some moments at the circle of people, and they, blandly alert, gazed back at him.

Suddenly from the side, elbowing his way through the wall of people, burst in the clown. Whether sent for to save the situation, or his toilette were only just completed, I did not discover. " B-o-n-soir, M'sieur et M'dames," he chirped, waved his hand, tumbled over his employer's foot ; the benches filled as by magic. But the most surprising thing was the change in the proprietor. No sooner had the clown made his entrance, and, with his assurance of success as the people's favourite, and comic familiarity, told the hangers-back to take their seats, than a brisk dialogue sprang up between him and his melancholy master, punctuated with resounding slaps at each fresh impertinence of the clown. The proprietor was truly astonishing. I rubbed my eyes. This lugubrious personage had woken to the sudden violence of an automatic figure set in motion. His nature is evidently subject to great extremes. In administering the chastisement so often merited by his irrepressible friend, he sprang nimbly backwards and forwards as though engaged in a boxing match, and grinned appreciatively at the clown's wit, as though in spite of himself, while nearly knocking his teeth out with delighted blows. The audience howled with delight, and every one seemed really happy for the moment, except the clown.

In the tradition of the circus it is a very distinct figure, the part having a psychology of its own—that of the man who invents posers for the clown, wrangles with him, and against whom the laugh is always turned.

One of the conventions of the circus is that the physical superiority of this personage should be legendary and indisputable among his friends. For however numerous the clowns may be they never attack him, despite the brutal measures he adopts to cover his confusion and ridicule. Like the Germans, he seems to be a man with a predilection for evening dress, the result being that he is a far more absurd figure than his gaping and bedecked opponent. It may be the clown's superstitious respect for rank, and this emblem of it, despite his consciousness of intellectual superiority, that causes this ruffianly dolt to remain immune.

In playing this part the pompous dignity of attitude should be preserved in the strictest integrity. The actor should seldom

smile. If so, it is only as a slight concession, and bid to induce the clown to take a more serious view of the matter under discussion. He smiles to make it evident that he also is furnished with this attribute of man—a discernment of the ridiculous. Then, with renewed gusto and solemnity, asks the clown's *serious* opinion of the question by which he seems obsessed, turning his head sideways with his ear towards his friend, and closing his eyes for a moment.

Or else it is the public for whom this smile is intended, and towards whom the discomfited "swell" in evening dress turns as towards his peers, for sympathy and understanding, when "scored off" anew, in, as the smile would affirm, this low-bred and unanswerable fashion. They are appealed to as though it were their mind that was being represented in the dialogue, and constantly discomfited, and he were merely their mouthpiece.

Without doubt this figure originally stood for the public. Out of compliment to the public, of course, they would provide him with evening dress. It would be tacitly understood by the courteous management, that although many of those present were in billycocks, that their native attire was evening clothes, or at least "smokking," as it is called abroad.

Also the distinguished public would doubtless appreciate the delicacy of touch of endowing its representative with a high bred inability to understand the jokes of his inferiors, or be a match for them in wit. In the better sort of circus he speaks in an obviously gentlemanlike voice—throaty, unctuous and rounding his periods.

In the little circuses, such as the one I am describing, his is a very lonely part. There are none of these appeals to the "auditoire"—as the latter claim, not only community of mind, but of class, with the clown. It becomes something like a dialogue between mimes representing employer and employee. But these original distinctions are not very strictly adhered to.

A man without a sense of humour, he finds himself with one of whose mischievous spirit he is aware, and whose ridicule he fears. Wishing to avoid being thought a bore, and racking his brains for a means of being entertaining, he suddenly brings to light a host of conundrums, for which he seems endowed with a positively stupefying memory. Thoroughly reassured by the finding of this powerful and traditional aid, with an amazing persistence he presses the clown, making use of every "gentle-manlike" subterfuge to extract a grave answer. "Why is a cabbage like a soul in purgatory?" "If you had seven pockets in your waistcoat, a rump pocket, a ticket pocket, and three

bogus pockets, how many stripes would there be in your trousers ? " And so they follow each other. It is dreadful to think how many conundrums he may know ! Or else some anecdote (a more unmanageable tool) is remembered. The clown here has many opportunities for displaying his mocking wit.

This is the rôle of honour usually reserved for the head showman. I always look out for this figure with special interest in the circus.

In this case the part was not played with very great consistency. Indeed so irrepressible were the comedian's spirits, and so unmanageable his vitality at times, that he seemed to be turning the tables on the clown. In his hollow lugubrious voice he drew out of his stomach many a caustic rejoinder to the clown's pert but stock wit, and the latter's ready-made quips were often no match for his strange but genuine hilarity.

During the whole evening he was rather " hors de son assiette "—hardly master of himself.

This out-of-door audience was differently moved to the audiences that I have seen in the little circus tents of the Breton fairs. The absence of the mysterious hush of the interior seemed to release them. Also the nearness of the performers in the tent increases the mystery. The proximity of these bulging muscles, painted faces and novel garbs impresses them strangely. They do not readily dissociate reality from appearance. Why primitive people are more imaginative is because everything for their mind retains its apparent diversity. However well they got to know the clown they would always think of him the wrong way up, or on all-fours. The more humble suburban theatre-goer would be twice as much affected if meeting the rouged and bewigged " prima donna " in the wings of the theatre, as in seeing her on the stage. Indeed it would be rather as though at some turning of an alley at the Zoo, he should meet a lion face to face—having gazed at it a few minutes before behind its bars. On the stage, and as seen from the pit, Othello is an ephemeral figure—a man that, like certain summer insects, never lives longer than two hours and a half. Met in the " coulisses " of the playhouse the actor would still be Othello for him, or more Othello than anything else, but in the flesh and in the same conditions of life as himself. The Moor might now have an intrigue with his sister Jane at any minute ! The theatre, the people on the stage and the plays they play, is part of the surface of life, and is not troubling. But to get behind the scenes and see these beings out of their parts, would be not merely to be privy to the workings and " dessous " of the theatre,

but of life itself. Is the illusion of a man's greatness diminished by reading anecdotes and biographies about him? It is only then that for his devotee the poignancy of the romance begins. The commonest detail—the sight of the most apocryphal pocket handkerchief or most dubious ink-pot, will excite his admirer more than a new work discovered from his hand. For with these humble, and even undignified, objects, the breathing man, life and all its boundless possibilities, is evoked, and all the volumes of the master's completed works could not move so much the devout imagination. The desire for intercourse and fleshly acquaintance with God that has always tormented man he has satisfied in the "great man" of these later times. In earlier epochs there were no "great men"; God was the Great Man. The Jewish people did not feel a much deeper personal awe for their prophets than the British people do for Mortimer Mempes, the biographer of Whistler, or any other man whose name we recall especially in connection with some master. The moment it was known that they had quarrelled with God, "that the spirit of God had forsaken them," they became ordinary people again. These servants of God were often severely criticised for their misrepresentations (doubtless unjustly) as are sometimes the servants of great men. But not seldom they were an impertinent and meddling type of fellow, and rank toadies of the Almighty. The possessors of strange destinies never lose by coming down among the people. Suddenly to be able to touch and to feel the breath of a thing of the imagination is a confirmation and reinforcement of the imagination. It is never so powerful in a man as in those moments when he first holds his love in his arms. Instinct of sex or genius is only that which may from hour to hour force any man to return to primitive vision. The cleverest fellow is only human, and runs the risk of being overtaken by genius at any moment, and having his best laid plans upset.

Crowded in the narrow and twilight pavilion of the Saltimbanques at the Breton "pardons," the audience will remain motionless for minutes together. Their imagination is awoken by the sight of the flags, the tent, the drums, and the bedizened people. Thenceforth it rules them, controlling the senses. They enter the tent with a feeling almost of awe. They are "suggestionné," and in a dream the whole time. All they see they change, add to, and colour. When a joke is made that requires a burst of merriment, or when a turn is finished, they all begin moving themselves as though they had just woken up, changing their attitude, shaking off a magnetic sleep.

LES SALTIMBANQUES

I first saw this circus troupe at a small town near Quimperlé. They had set up their tent. The clown conducted, so to speak, everything—acting as interpreter of his own jokes, tumbling over and getting up and leading the laugh, and explaining with real conscientiousness and science the proprietor's more recondite and tenebrous conundrums. He took up an impersonal attitude, as a friend who had dropped in to see the " patron," and who appreciated quite as one of the public the curiosities of the show. He would say for instance : " Now this is very remarkable : this little girl is only eleven, and she can put both her toes in her mouth," &c. &c. If it hadn't been for his comments, I am persuaded that the performance would have passed off in a profound, though not unappreciative, silence.

To return to my description of their evening at Quimperlé, some hour after the initial bout between the clown and his master, and while some chairs were being placed in the middle of the ring, I became aware of a very grave expression on the latter's face. He now mounted on to one of the chairs. Having remained impressively silent till the last moment, from the edge of the chair, as though from the brink of a precipice, he addressed the audience in the following terms. " Ladies and Gentlemen, I have given up working for several years myself, owing to ill-health. My little girl has taken my place. But Monsieur le Commissaire de Police of Quimperlé would not give the necessary permission for her to appear. Then I will myself perform." At these words he jerked himself violently over the back of the chair, the unathletic proportions of his stomach being revealed in this movement, and touched the ground with his head. Then having bowed to the audience he turned again to the chairs and grasping them, with a gesture of the utmost recklessness, heaved his body up into the air. This was accompanied by a blood-curdling whirr sent forth by his corduroys, and a creaking and cracking of his joints of a most alarming nature. Afterwards he accomplished a third feat, suspending himself between two chairs, and a fourth in which he gracefully lay on all three and picked up a handkerchief with his back teeth. At this sensational finish, my enthusiasm knew no bounds, and I applauded vociferously. But when my ardour had a little cooled I felt confused to find that I had attracted some attention, and astonished at perceiving the performer glancing in my direction with a mixture of dislike and reproof. However, he treated all of us rather coldly, bowed stiffly and walked back to the cart with the air of a man who has just received a bullet wound in a duel, and refusing the assistance of his friends, walks to his carriage.

He had accomplished the feats that I have just described with a bitter dash and a desperate "entrain" truly surprising. "Be it on your own head, M. le Commissaire, if I do myself an injury." He seemed courting misfortune. A mournful, solemn and respectful, a *dead* silence would have been the ideal way, from his point of view, for the audience to have greeted his pathetic skill. And I can understand now that our applause had seemed impertinent and unfeeling. He went back and leant against the cart, his head in the hollow of his arm, coughing and spitting. A boy at my side said, "Regarde-donc ; il souffre" (look how ill he is !). This refusal of the magistrate to let his little girl perform, was an event that touched him very deeply. His remarkable behaviour all through the evening came from this no doubt. That his right to make his own child stand on her head, and put her leg round her neck should be questioned wounded his French sentiment of liberty to the quick, and struck at certain dim patriarchal bases of his spirit. His wife also was affected, but less profoundly, as I judged, and was more usual and consistent in her way of showing it. She, indeed, provided, shortly afterwards, a new and interesting feature of the evening's entertainment.

Various items immediately succeeded the showman's dramatic exploits. A donkey appeared, whose legs could be tied into knots, and the clown extracted from its middle-class and comfortable primness of expression every jest of which it was susceptible. The conundrums broke out again, and only ceased after a discharge that lasted fully a quarter of an hour. There was a little trapeze. I had noticed for some time already a restless figure in the background. A woman with an expression of great dissatisfaction on her face, stood with muffled arms knotted on her chest, holding a shawl against the cold. Next I became aware of a harsh and indignant voice, and saw this woman slowly advancing and talking the while until arrived in the middle of the circle, when she made several slow gestures, slightly raising her voice. She spoke as a person who had stood things long enough. "Here are hundreds of people standing round, and there are hardly a dozen sous on the carpet. We give you entertainment, but it is not for nothing. We do not work for nothing ! We have our living to make as well as other people. This is the third performance we have given to-day. We are tired and have come a long way to appear before you this evening. You want to enjoy yourselves but don't want to pay. If you want to see any more loosen your purse-strings a little !"

While delivering this harangue, her attitude resembled that

seen in the London streets when women are quarrelling—the neck strained forward, the face bent down, and the eyes glowering upwards at the adversary—or in this case on the people in front—and one hand thrust out in a remonstrative gesture. Also the body is generally screwed round to express the impulse of turning on the heel in disgust and walking away, while the face still confronts whoever is being apostrophised, and utters its ever-renewed maledictory post-scriptums.

Several pieces of money fell at her feet, and eventually she slowly retired, her eyes still flashing, and scowling resentfully round at the crowd. They looked on with amiable and gaping attention, evidently thoroughly interested in her and sympathising with her unconditionally. There was no response to the hostile declamation—no jibing or discontent; only a few more sous were thrown. Her husband evidently felt stirred at her speech, and one or two volcanic conundrums followed closely upon her exit. The audience seemed to relish the entertainment all the more after this confirmation from the proprietress of its quality, instead of being put in a more critical frame of mind.

Her indignant outburst did not owe its tone of conviction to the fact that she conceived a high opinion of their performance. In her harangue she spoke as though the public paid, for some inexplicable reason, not for its proper amusement, but for the trouble, inconvenience, fatigue, and in sum for all the ills of their, the circus people's, existence; or rather did *not* pay. It was this that so bitterly incensed her.

The people (or the people that I chiefly know, these Bretons) are spiritually herded to their amusements as prisoners are served out their daily soup, and weekly square inch of tobacco. The spending of their wages is as much a routine as the earning of them. Also in their pleasures—and when buying them with their own money—they support the same brow-beating and discipline as in their work. The circus proprietor and his wife represented for the moment the principle of authority, and they received the reproof as to their slackness in spending their money, as they would a master's just abuse if they showed a slackness in earning it.

The comedy, or possibility of it, that an educated man sees existing in everything, the people only feel in a restricted number of persons and things, and this is subject to the narrowest convention of habit. A peasant would never see anything ridiculous, or at least never amuse himself over, his pigs and chickens. The donkey that helps to get his living would never be a cause of amusement to him, as his constant sentiment of

its utility would be too strong to admit of another; as a man who succeeds in revolting or angering us need never fear our ridicule, although he may increase the other emotion by his absurdity.

A countryman in urging on his beast may make some disobliging remark to it, really seizing a ludicrous point in its appearance to envenom his epithet with, but it will be caustic and dry, and an observation of his intelligence far removed from an hilarious emotion. Or it will come out of his anger and impatience and not his gaiety. One sees in the Breton peasant a constant tendency to sarcasm. Their hysterical and monotonous voices are always pitched in a strain of fierce raillery and abuse. But this does not infect their mirth. Their laughter is forced and meant to be wounding, and with their grins and quips they are like armed men who never meet without clashing their swords together.

They dance, work and amuse themselves fatalistically. There is a time for dancing and for working. Also there is a place, occasion and certain people marked out to entertain others, and fate has ordained that these people shall be the most diverting and comic folk that exist, else they would not be public entertainers. And if the clown and the manager consulted in an audible voice before cracking each joke, concocted it, in fact, in their hearing, they would laugh at it with the same fervour. Any tawdry makeshift for scenery, any stupid trick done by one of these accredited acrobats that they themselves could do twice as well, is not enough to destroy their illusion, and drive them into revolt. It would be a revolt against Fate to criticise the amusements that Fate has provided for them, and it would be a sign of imminent anarchy in all things if they looked solemn while the clown was cracking a joke.

They are accustomed to look upon all conditions of life as inevitable. They can never conceive of a man being anything else but what he is. They have this primitive wisdom. A man is a carpenter or shoemaker. He may be lazy or unskilful, and they will say he is not as good as his rival, but he is as irretrievably a carpenter or shoemaker as his name is John or William, and just as no man with another name could become John or William, so no baker could usurp the place that he fills. This is not the same as the conscious argument that because he has learnt this trade he is to be respected and accepted in that capacity. He possesses it as indisputably as though it were a physical attribute; he is for them "*John* the *carpenter*."

The showman's wife had occasion to again sally forth and

lash the public in the course of the evening. Towards the end of the performance the donkey was led in once more, pretended to die, and the clown pretended to weep over it. All was quiet and preparation for a moment.

Then a strange thing happened. A little boy in the front row began jeering at the proprietor. It was apparently a spontaneous and personal action, and very sudden. The outraged showman slouched past him several times, looking at him out of the corner of his eye in the most ludicrous fashion, and with his head thrust out as though he were going to crow. He rubbed his hands as before chastising the clown. This new event evidently perplexed him considerably. He went and complained to the clown in a whisper. This personage had just revealed himself as an athlete, and now looked with a most serious and pompous eye at the audience. Supposing that his master's complaint referred to some drunken countryman, he advanced quickly and threateningly in the direction of the offender, but finding a thoughtful looking little boy, returned to his preparations for the next event.

This boy had probably never thought comically before. Like corrosive lavas that illuminate before they destroy the object in their path, the torrent of his thoughts wrapt this dim and brutal figure. Revealed by his own genial eruption he beheld it, with all the character of a vision. His oracular vehemence suggested a sudden awakening, as though the comedy of existence had burst in upon his active young brain without warning, and, in the form and nature of this awkward showman, was now raging within him like a heady wine. He had of a sudden opened his lips among the people and begun covering this man with his mockery. I was extremely moved and even awed at this sight.

The showman prowled about the enclosure, grinning, and casting sidelong glances at his poet. His vanity was in some very profound and strange way tickled. But his face would suddenly darken and he would make a rush at the inexplicable boy. This latter, however, was strong in his inspiration. He would no doubt have met death with the exultation of a martyr, rather than renounce this transfigured image of an old and despondent mountebank—like some stubborn prophet that would not forego the splendour of his vision—always of the gloom of famine, of cracked and empty palaces, and the elements taking new and extremely destructive forms for the rapid extermination of man.

The Art of Dining

By Elizabeth Martindale

This morning when I woke and peered over my numberless blankets my breath was like steam in the cold, still air; I saw that the grass was white with frost and I drew my hands back into the warmth of the bedclothes. Sleeping out of doors makes me dreamy—especially in the winter. There is every reason to lie wrapped up and warm, doing nothing at all but watch the sunlight that comes through the pigeon-holes above me. These holes are really for ventilation but they serve other purposes. As soon as the sun is up it casts through them two deep copper-coloured shafts of light seeming to set fire to the stray pieces of straw that dangle from the roof above me. There is no ceiling of any sort to conceal the thatch—in fact, my sleeping-place is like a waggon lodge.

Here in Kent a waggon lodge is built of massive uprights and beams, with the sides open so as to leave the waggons room to be trundled in and out. They are necessary and picturesque, and when they are not used for carts they serve as a storing-place for unwieldy farm implements that cannot easily be carried off by tramps or gipsies. My gardener, Wedman, calls these wanderers "waygoin' folks," and is seized with an apparently irrational panic whenever one of them comes along the road.

But here lying in my little shanty there is nothing to fear, for my collie who sleeps under my bed is always on the alert. I am quite at peace in the stillness of my hiding-place. There is nothing that glares, the tones of the rough unpainted chestnut posts, the sails, that can be let down as a shelter from wind and rain and snow, with their double seams of dark string, the thatched roof and yellow sanded floor all harmonise perfectly. With my eyes resting on them I am happy and more at peace than I have ever been.

Perched up very high on the edge of a green stony hill, I feel like an eagle in her nest. Before me there is a great deep stretch of sky, and it is a very light blue on this still morning; the sun

glistens with a silver light on the streak of sea far out beyond the marsh, and the land at my feet is hazy and level and mysterious.

Wedman, who built this little nest, was very unhappy at the time, and spent nights of anxiety fearing all sorts of disasters if I persisted in sleeping in such a place.

He said, "Wull, at any rate, you'll be better than the Son o' Man. You *have* a bed to sleep in and He had nowhere to lay His head."

I had a hard tussle with him over the thatch. "The eari-wigs 'll be dropping down on you and the birds'll come a-nesting," he said.

It is true the birds do come and so did the earwigs in the summer, but they are here for so short a time, and when they are once gone I begin to think that they really were not very unpleasant. They were here with the hot suns and cool clear nights—little summery things that seem very remote now and I have not the heart to think badly of them.

The birds come every morning through the same holes with the sun. At first they were shy, but I lie very still and as time goes on they come nearer and nearer. They hop about over my slippers now, and they no longer regard me as a human being. The sparrows are boisterous and rough. I am not very fond of sparrows. It is pleasant to watch the tomtit with its very distinct markings of black and yellow; it seems a gentle, soft-hearted thing amongst the tribe of bickering sparrows. But what pleases me most is a wren that creeps in alone like a little mouse. She runs about amongst the crevices between the rafters, tilting up her tiny twig-like bill as though she were already hunting for a future nesting-place and I am hoping that she will not leave me in the spring.

This morning when it was so frosty and so still I thought: "No need to get up yet—there's no gardening to see to to-day, because Wedman's going to the wood sale." Then my thoughts travelled to the good dinner that he would have after it—how he would enjoy the slices of hot roast beef, the feeling of there being for once sufficient to cut and come again and time enough to sit and talk over it all at his leisure.

"The luxury of to-day is the necessity of to-morrow," I read yesterday in an article on "The Art of Dining." It dwelt on these necessities in tender and respectful phrases, as though the pitch of excellence that we think we have now attained must be nurtured and guarded from any devious path. There is no reason why it should not be.

It is an entrancing form of excitement, being borne along in spasmodic fits and starts between the lights and the crush of hurrying, glimmering faces and forms. The chilliness of bare shoulders under flimsy coverings creeps through every nerve and makes me more alive to every sound and word. I should not be nearly so fascinated by such an escapade wrapped up in a motor coat. At the end of the cold journey I am fully prepared to enjoy the warmth floating down the staircase from heated rooms, the thick carpets, the waiters with their tactful and attentive airs and the pulsating melodies from stringed instruments, strains that will mingle so well with my red wine.—Yes, it all carries one on until one believes, especially if one is young, that one is nearing, not Heaven perhaps, but a vague overpowering exaltation.

And I lay with my eyes on the silver streak of sea thinking about it for a long time. The more I thought, the more I became charmed with the fancy that I had conjured up for myself.

But after a time there came a change—I was looking at the people in that electric lighted room—the others around me. Their faces seemed dull, as if they were watching for something that never comes. They had that set expression. They looked as if they were longing for something either to laugh at or to dread, something ludicrous and heartless enough to be comic, something to tighten up the nerve threads with no matter what kind of emotion, some act of God, some fire or an earthquake alone would make them feel again that life was interesting, fascinating and wonderful. It made me sad to think that there is no exaltation for them in the art of dining—they are too used to it. Their senses are numbed by the continual occurrence of such episodes.

I turned my drowsy gaze to the storm candle on the window-sill. In the summer the opening had been cut in the woodwork by my bed, so that the sun should warm me while I drank my morning tea, but it is closed up now with a rush mat. The glass has not yet been put in—somehow although not very nervous, I cannot remain by an uncurtained window at night and the mere idea of a curtain in my rough shanty seems absurd.

"Yes," I thought, "why is it that we tire of things as soon as we have much of them?" And what depressed me particularly was the thought that with all his simplicity even Wedman if he had a wood-sale dinner every day would one day be gazing out with that same expression and would no longer be ready to laugh when the punch was spilt out of the ladle by the shaky

hand of the biggest wood-buyer. That ladle and bowl have been used year upon year and these dinners are one of the festive and most important events of the year. Here on the outskirts of the Weald there is enough wood sold every Michaelmas to keep the labourers at work through the winter. Wedman calls it "Getting in the woods out o' sight," and each man that buys a cant of wood is entitled to a dinner. It is a good dinner, too, more of meats and Christmas puddings than they can all eat, followed by songs, drinks, tales of the past year and reminiscences of other wood-sale dinners. "A reg'lar enjoyable afternoon," I know Wedman will say, and as the heavy feet trudge along the road with stiffening limbs I think what a welcome change it will be from chopping down thorny hedges in lambskin gloves, or cleaning dykes in waterproof boots or lurching over heavy clinging earth behind a plough that will not furrow straight or deep, unless a man's whole attention be given to it.

In the autumn before it was time to take up the potatoes Wedman went for a four days' holiday. He saw a good deal in that time. He told me he had been in five towns but he seemed quite glad to be back and at work again. Town life was not the life for him. He liked to be doing something out of doors, and I believe he would sicken and even die if he were compelled to live in a city with a circumscribed trade to follow. He would know that the change would bring him more companionship, more education and more pleasures of a town kind but they would not be a recompense for him. He would miss the open fields, the winding closed-in lanes, the scent of the air at dusk and dawn. When he comes up to work now Grisnez light and Dungeness too, are still flashing out in the queer winter morning obscurity. He would miss them—sometimes he mentions them—and most of all he would miss the woods.

Last night after his day's work we were talking about the sale. I said he ought to buy some cants for his sons to work. He said with a gently derisive laugh: "My sons work in the woods!" There are nine of them but only the two youngest are still at home. Education drives ideas into their heads very early. Daily papers are easily procurable and of an evening, reading through advertisement columns they have each in turn made their choice. One is in the navy, one a policeman, one an insurance clerk, one a groom and so on. They are all fine men, and not one of them sufficiently simple-minded to stay on the land with his father. Of course, the work he does is too hard, and there is not enough pay in the country for young men with advanced ideas and exaggerated notions. I think there was a time

when Wedman felt the same way. He has not always lived here and he tells me if he had been a better scholar he would not be here now. I am glad for his own sake, as well as mine, that he was not. His fund of practical knowledge has no limit. There is nothing in a manual way that he cannot do. A good education would not have increased his intelligence and it might have marred his character. As it is his grey eyes, his long face and pointed beard, his thin, bending figure and his gentle manners suggest an Elizabethan courtier. He is always an interesting and cheerful companion.

I pictured him in that restaurant in London. He would be a distinguished-looking person and evening dress would suit him. I think he would quite understand the art of dining, and he would command a hearing with his insight of his fellow man, his knowledge of material facts and his picturesque way of illustrating his statements. I think these qualities of his are always to be found only in those who are constantly and diligently wrapped up in their work. For them work, whether physical or mental, stands for contentment. It takes the place of pleasure and it is very near being the gate to Heaven. And it is this power of concentration of mind and body, this eternal striving after having a thing well done to the best of one's abilities that I admire so much.

The sun was rising higher and beginning to melt the white frost on the lawn and I thought it was time for me to be up. I put on my fur coat, and as I went out I wondered what the man who wrote on the art of dining would do at one of Wedman's dinners.

A Call

A Tale of a Passion

By Ford Madox Hueffer

PART I

I

It was once said of Mr. Robert Grimshaw : " That chap is like a seal : "—and the simile was a singularly just one. He was like a seal who is thrusting his head and shoulders out of the water and, with large, dark eyes and sensitive nostrils, is on the watch. All that could be known of him seemed to be known : all that could be known of the rest of the world he moved in he seemed to know. He carried about with him usually, in a crook of his arm, a polished, light-brown dachshund that had very large feet and eyes as large, as brown and as luminous as those of his master. Upon the occasion of Pauline Lucas' marriage to Dudley Leicester the dog was not upon his arm, but he carried it into the drawing-rooms of the many ladies who welcomed him to afternoon tea. Apparently it had no attractions save its clear and beautiful colour, its excellent, if very grotesque shape and its complete docility. He called upon a lady at tea-time, and with the same motion that let him down into his chair, he would set the dog upon the floor between his legs. There it would remain, as motionless and as erect as a fire-dog until it was offered a piece of buttered tea-cake which it would accept, or until its master gave it a minute and hardly audible permission to rove about. Then it would rove. The grotesque, large-little feet paddled, set wide upon the carpet, the long ears flapped to the ground. But above all, the pointed and sensitive nose would investigate with a minute attention but with an infinite gentleness, every object within its reach in the room, from the line of the skirting-board to the legs of the piano and the flounced skirts of the ladies sitting near the tea-tables. Robert Grimshaw would observe these investigations with an indulgent approval ; and, indeed

some one else once said—and perhaps with more justness—that Mr. Grimshaw resembled most nearly his own dog Peter.

But, upon the occasion of Pauline Lucas' marriage to Dudley Leicester, in the rustle of laces, the brushing sound of feet upon the cocoanut matting, to the strains of the organ and the honk of automobiles that, arriving, set down perpetually new arrivals, the dog Peter pursued no investigations. Neither, indeed, did Mr. Grimshaw, for he was upon ground absolutely familiar. He was heard to be asked and to answer : " Where *did* Cora Strangeways get her dresses made ? " with the words : " Oh ! she gets them at Madame Serafine's in Sloane Street. I waited outside once in her brougham for nearly two hours."

And to ladies who asked for information as to the bride's antecedents he would answer patiently and gently—it was at the very beginning of the winter season and there were present a great many people " back from " all sorts of places from the Rhine to Caracas—" Oh ! Pauline's folk are the very best sort of people in the world. Her mother was Army, her father Navy—well, you all know the Lucases of Laughton, or you ought to. Yes, it's quite true what you've heard, Mrs. Tressillian, Pauline was a Nursery Governess. What do you make of it ? Her father *would* go a mucker in South American Water Works because he'd passed a great deal of his life on South American stations, and thought he knew the country. So he joined the other Holy Innocents—the ones with wings—and Pauline had to go as a Nursery Governess till her mother's people compounded with her father's creditors."

And to Hartley Jenx's croaking remark that Dudley Leicester might have done himself better, Grimshaw, with his eyes upon the bride, raised and hardened his voice to say :

" Nobody in the world could have done better, my good man. If it hadn't been Dudley it would have been me. You've come to the wrong shop. *I* know what I'm talking about. I haven't been carting Yankees around ruins : I've been in the centre of things."

Hartley Jenx, who estimated Dudley Leicester at five thousand a year, and several directorates, estimated Grimshaw at a little over ten, plus what he must have saved in the six years since he had come into the Spartalide money. For it was obvious that Grimshaw, who lived in rooms off Cadogan Square and had only the smallest of bachelor shoots—that Grimshaw couldn't spend anything like his income. And amongst the guests at the subsequent reception, Hartley Jenx—who made a living by showing Americans round the country in summer, and by

managing a Charitable Steam Laundry in the winter—Hartley Jenx's croaking voice might at intervals be heard exclaiming:

"My *dear* Mrs. Van Notten, my dear Miss Schuylkill, we don't estimate a girl's fortune here by what she's got, but by what she's refused." And to the accentuated "My's!" of the two ladies from Poughkeepsie he added with a singular gravity:

"The bride of the day has refused sixty thousand dollars a year."

So that although the illustrated papers lavishly reproduced Pauline's pink and white beauty; stated that her father was the late Commodore Lucas, and her mother a daughter of Quarternion Castlemaine and omitted the fact that she had refused twelve thousand a year to marry seven and a few directorates, there were very few of those whom Grimshaw desired to have the knowledge that did not know this his tragedy.

On the steps of the church, Robert Grimshaw was greeted by his cousin Ellida Langham whose heavily patterned black veil, drooping hat of black fur and long coat all black with the wide black sleeves enhanced the darkness of her coal-black eyes, the cherry colour of her cheeks and the rich red of her large lips. Holding out her black-gloved hand with an odd little gesture as if at the same time she were withdrawing it she uttered the words:

"Have you heard anything of Katya?" Her head seemed to be drawn back, bird-like, into the thick furs on her neck and her voice had in it a plaintive quality. Being one of two daughters of the late Peter Lascarides and the wife of Paul Langham, she was accounted fortunate as owning great possessions, a very attached husband and sound health. The plaintive tone in her voice was set down to the fact that her little daughter of six was said to be mentally afflicted and her sister Katya to have behaved in the strangest possible manner. Indeed, Mr. Hartley Jenx was accustomed to assure his American friends that Katya Lascarides had been sent abroad under restraint though her friends gave it out that she was in Philadelphia working at a nerve-cure place.

"She is still in Philadelphia," Robert Grimshaw answered, "but I haven't heard from her."

Ellida Langham shivered a little in her furs.

"These November weddings always make me think of Katya and you," she said. "It was to have been done for you in November too. I don't think you have forgotten."

"I'm going to walk in the park for ten minutes," Grimshaw replied, "Peter's in the shop. Come too."

She hooked herself on to his arm to be conducted to her *coupé* at the end of a strip of red carpet and in less than two minutes they were dropped on the pavement beside the little cigar-shop that is set, as it were into the railings of the park. Here Peter, the dachshund, sitting patiently on the spot where his master had left him, beside the door mat, greeted Robert Grimshaw with one tiny whimper and a bow of joy and then, his nose a hair's-breadth from Robert Grimshaw's heel, he paddled after them into the park.

It was very grey, leafless and deserted. The long rows of chairs stretched out untenanted and the long perspective of the soft-going Ladies' Mile had no single rider. They walked very slowly and spoke in low tones.

"I almost wish," Ellida Langham said, "that you had taken Katya's offer. What could have been said worse of her than they say now?"

"What do you say of her as it is?" Robert Grimshaw answered.

Mrs. Langham drooped in discouragement.

"That she is engaged in good works. But in Philadelphia! Who believes in good works in Philadelphia? Besides she's acting as a nurse. For payment. That isn't good works and it's disagreeable to lie even about one's sister."

"Whatever Katya did," Robert Grimshaw answered seriously, "she would be engaged in good works. You might pay her a king's salary and she'd still do more than she was paid for. That's what it is to do good works."

"But if you had taken her on her own terms. . . ." Mrs. Langham seemed as if she were pleading with him. "Don't you think that one day she or you will give in?"

"I think she never will and she may be right," he answered. "I think I never shall and I know I am."

"But if no one ever knew," she said, "wouldn't it be the same thing as the other thing?"

"Ellida dear," he answered gravely, "wouldn't *that* mean a great deal more lying for you—about your sister?"

"But wouldn't it be much better worth lying about?" she appealed to him. "You are such a dear, she's such a dear and I could cry, I want you to come together so much."

"I don't think I shall ever give in," he answered. And then seeing a real moisture of tears in the eyes that were turned towards him he added:

"I might, but not till I grow much more tired—oh *much* more tired!—than I am."

And then he added as briskly as he could, for he spoke habitually in low tones, "I am coming in to supper to-night, tell Paul. How's Kitty?"

They were turning across the soft-going down towards where Mrs. Langham's motor was waiting for her beside the door of the French Embassy.

"Oh, Doctor Tressider says there's nothing to be fundamentally anxious about. He says that there are many children of three who are healthy enough and can't speak. I don't exactly know how to put it but he says—well, you might call it a form of obstinacy."

Robert Grimshaw said "Ah!"

"Oh, I know you think," his cousin commented, "that that runs in the family. At any rate there's Kitty as lively as a lark and perfectly sound physically and she won't speak."

"And there's Katya," Mr. Grimshaw said, "as lively as a thoroughbred and as sound as a roach and a great deal better than any angel—and she won't marry."

Again Mrs. Langham was silent for a moment or two, then she added:

"There was mother too. I suppose that was a form of obstinacy. You remember Katya always *used* to say that she would imitate poor mother to the death. Why—mother used to dress ten years before her age so that Katya should not look like a lady of fifty. What a couple of angels they were, weren't they?"

"You haven't heard," Mr. Grimshaw continued his musings, "you haven't heard from your mother's people that there *was* any obstacle?"

"None in the world," she answered. "There couldn't have been. We've made all the inquiries that were possible. Why, my father's private bank-books for years and years back exist to this day, and there's no payment in them that can't be traced. There would have been mysterious cheques if there were anything of the sort, but there's nothing, nothing. And mother, well you know the Greek system of dealing with girls, she was shut up in a harem till she—till she came out here to father. No, it's inexplicable."

"Well, if Kitty's obstinate *not* to imitate people," Grimshaw commented, "you can only say that Katya's obstinacy takes the form of imitation."

Mrs. Langham gave vent to a little sort of wail.

"You aren't going back on Katya?" she said. "It isn't true, is it, that there's another?"

"I don't know whether it's true or not true," Grimshaw

said, "but you can take it that to-day's ceremony has hit me a little hard. Katya is always first, but think of that dear little woman tied to the sort of obtuse hypochondriac that Dudley Leicester is."

"Oh, but there's nothing *in* Pauline Lucas," Mrs. Langham objected, "and I shouldn't say Dudley was a hypochondriac. He looks the picture of health."

"Ah, you don't know Dudley Leicester as I do," Grimshaw said. "I've been his best friend for years."

"I know you've been very good to him," Ellida Langham answered.

"I know I have," Grimshaw replied as nearly as possible grimly. "And haven't I now given him what was dearest and best to me?"

"But Katya?" Mrs. Langham said.

"One wants Katya," Grimshaw said. "One wants Katya. She is vigour, she is life, she is action, she is companionship. One wants her if you like because she is chivalry itself, and so she's obstinate; but, if one can't have Katya, one wants . . ."

He paused and looked at the dachshund that, when he paused, paused and looked back at him.

"That's what one wants," he continued. "One wants tenderness, fidelity, pretty grace, quaintness and above all worship. Katya could give me companionship: but wouldn't Pauline have given me worship?"

"But still," Mrs. Langham commenced. . . .

"Oh, I know," Grimshaw interrupted, "there's nothing *in* her, but still . . ."

"But still," Mrs. Langham mocked him, "dear old Toto, you *do* want to talk about her. Let's take another little turn, I can give you five minutes more."

She beckoned to her car to come in at the gates, and follow them along the side-walk past the tall barracks in the direction of Kensington.

"Yes, I dearly want to talk about Pauline," Grimshaw said, and his cousin laughed out the words:

"Oh, you strong silent men! Don't you know you are called a strong, silent man? I remember how you used to talk to Katya and me about all the others before you got engaged to Katya. When I come to think of it, the others were all little doll-things like Pauline Leicester. Katya used to say: 'There's nothing *in* them!' She used to say it in private to me. It tore her heart to shreds, you know. I couldn't understand how you came

to turn from them to her, but I know you did and I know you do."

"You haven't changed a bit, Toto," she began again. "You play at being serious and reserved and mysterious and full of knowledge but you're still the kiddie in knickerbockers who used to have his pockets full of chocolate-creams for the gardener's mite of a daughter. I remember, I used to see you watching her skip. You'd stand for minutes at a time and just devour her with your eyes—a little tot of a thing. And then you'd throw her the chocolate creams out of the window. You were twelve and I was nine and Katya was seven, and the gardener's daughter was six, but what an odd boy I used to think you!"

"That's precisely it," Grimshaw said. "That's what I want in Pauline. I don't want to touch her. I want to watch her going through the Lancers with that little mouth just open and the little hand just holding out her skirt and a little, tender expression of joy. Don't you see—just to watch her? She's a small, light bird. I want to have her in a cage, to chirrup over her, to whistle to her, to give her grapes and to have her peep up at me and worship me. No, I haven't changed. When I was that boy it didn't occur to me that I could have Katya; we were like brother and sister, so I wanted to watch little Millie Neil. Now I know I might have Katya and I can't, so I want to watch Pauline Leicester. I want to. I want to. I want to."

His tones were perfectly level and tranquil. He used no gesture. His eyes remained upon the sand of the rolled sidewalk but his absolutely monotonous voice expressed a longing so deep and so deep a hunger that Ellida Langham said:

"Oh, come, cheer up, old Toto, you'll be able to watch her as much as you want. I suppose you will dine with the Leicesters the three times a week that you don't dine with us and have tea with Pauline every day, won't you?"

"But they're going out of England for a month," Grimshaw said, "and I'm due to start for Athens the day before they come back."

"Oh, poor boy," Ellida commiserated him. "You won't be able to watch your bird in Leicester's cage for a whole ten weeks. I believe you'd like to cry over her."

"I should like to cry over her," Robert Grimshaw said with perfect gravity. "I should like to kneel down and put my face in her lap and cry and cry and cry."

"As you used to do with me years ago," she said.

"As I used to do with you," he answered.

"Poor old Toto," she said very slowly and he kissed her on

her veil over her cheek whilst he handed her into her *coupé*. She waved her black-gloved fingers at him out of the passing window and, his hands behind his back, his shoulders square and his face serious, tranquil and expressing no emotion, he slowly continued his stroll towards the Albert Memorial. He paused, indeed, to watch four sparrows hopping delicately on their mysterious errands, their heads erect through the grimy and long grass between the Park railings and the path. It appeared to him that they were going ironically through a set of Lancers and the smallest of them, a paler coloured hen, might have been Pauline Leicester.

II

That was not, however, to be the final colloquy between Robert Grimshaw and Ellida Langham for he was again upon her doorstep just before her time to pour out tea.

"What is the matter?" she asked. "You know you *aren't* looking well, Toto."

Robert Grimshaw was a man of thirty-five who, by reason that he allowed himself the single eccentricity of a very black, short beard, might have passed for fifty. His black hair grew so far back upon his brow that he had an air of incipient baldness; his nose was very aquiline and very sharply modelled at the tip and when, at a Christmas party, to amuse his little niece, he had put on a red stocking-cap, many of the children had been frightened of him, so much did he resemble a Levantine pirate. His manners, however, were singularly unnoticeable; he spoke in habitually low tones; no one exactly knew the extent of his resources, but he was reputed rather "close" because he severely limited his expenditure. He commanded a cook, a parlour-maid, a knife-boy and a man called Jervis, who was the husband of his cook, and he kept them upon board wages. His habits were of an extreme regularity and he had never been known to raise his voice. He was rather an adept with the fencing sword and save for his engagement to Katya Lascarides and its rupture, he had had no appreciable history. And indeed Katya Lascarides was by now so nearly forgotten in Mayfair that he was beginning to pass for a confirmed bachelor. His conduct with regard to Pauline Lucas, whom everybody had expected him to marry, was taken by most of his friends to indicate that he had achieved that habit of mind that causes a man to shrink from the disturbance that a woman would cause to his course of life. Himself the son of an English banker and of a lady called Lascarides he had lost both his parents before he was three years old

and he had been brought up by his uncle and aunt, the Peter Lascarides, and in the daily society of his cousins Katya and Ellida.

Comparatively late—perhaps because, as Ellida said, he had always regarded his cousins as his sisters—he had become engaged to his cousin Katya very much to the satisfaction of his uncle and his aunt. But Mrs. Lascarides having died shortly before the marriage was to have taken place it was put off, and the death of Mr. Lascarides occurring four months later, and with extreme suddenness, the match was broken off, for no reason that any one knew, altogether. Mr. Lascarides had, it was known, died intestate—and apparently according to Greek law Robert Grimshaw had become his uncle's sole heir. But he was understood to have acted exceedingly handsomely by his cousins. Indeed it was a fact Mr. Hartley Jenx had definitely ascertained that upon the marriage of Ellida to Paul Langham, Robert Grimshaw had executed in her benefit settlements of a sum that must have amounted to very nearly half his uncle's great fortune. Her sister Katya, who had been attached to her mother with a devotion that her English friends considered to be positively hysterical, had, it was pretty clearly understood, become exceedingly strange in her manner after her mother's death. The reason for her rupture with Robert Grimshaw was not very clearly understood, but it was generally thought to be due to religious differences. Mrs. Lascarides had been exceedingly attached to the Greek Orthodox church, whereas upon going to Winchester Robert Grimshaw, for the sake of convenience and with the consent of his uncle, had been received into the Church of England. But whatever the cause of the rupture there was no doubt that it was an occasion of great bitterness. Katya Lascarides certainly suffered from a species of nervous breakdown and passed some months in a hydropathic establishment on the Continent; and it was afterwards known by those who took the trouble to be at all accurate in their gossip that she had passed over to Philadelphia in order to study the more obscure forms of nervous diseases. In this study she was understood to have gained a very great proficiency, for Mrs. Clement P. Van Husum, junior, whose balloon parties were such a feature of at least one London season and who herself had been one of Miss Lascarides' patients, was accustomed to say with all the enthusiastic emphasis of her country and race—she had been before marriage a Miss Carteighe, of Hoboken, N.Y.—that not only had Katya Lascarides saved her life and reason, but that the chief of the Philadelphian Institute was accustomed always to send Katya to diagnose

obscure cases in the more remote parts of the American continent. It was, as the few friends that Katya had remaining in London said, a little out of the picture—at any rate of the picture of the slim, dark and passionate girl with the extreme, pale beauty and the dark eyes that they remembered her to have had. But there was no knowing what religion might not have done for this southern nature, if indeed religion was the motive of the rupture with Robert Grimshaw and she was known to have refused to receive from her cousin any of her father's money, so that that too had some of the aspect of her having become a nun or at any rate of her having adopted a cloistral frame of mind, devoting herself, as her sister Ellida said, "to good works." But whatever the cause of the quarrel, there had been no doubt that Robert Grimshaw had felt the blow very severely—as severely as it was possible for such things to be felt in the restrained atmosphere of the more southerly and western portions of London. He had disappeared, indeed, for a time—though it was understood that he had been spending several months in Athens arranging his uncle's affairs and attending to those of the firm of Peter Lascarides and Company, of which firm he had become a director. And even when he returned to London it was to be observed that he was still very "hipped." What was at all times most noticeable about him to those who observed these things was the pallor of his complexion. When he was in health this extreme and delicate whiteness had a subcutaneous flush like the intangible colouring of a China rose. But upon his return from Athens it had, and it retained for some time, the peculiar and chalky opacity. Shortly after his return he engrossed himself in the affairs of his friend Dudley Leicester, who had lately come into very large but very involved estates. Dudley Leicester, who, whatever he had, had no head for business, had been Robert Grimshaw's fag at school, and had been his almost daily companion at Oxford and ever since. But little by little the normal flush had returned to Robert Grimshaw's face; only whilst lounging through life he appeared to become more occupied in his mind, more reserved, more benevolent and more gentle.

It was on observing a return of the excessive and chalk-like opacity in Robert Grimshaw's cheeks that Ellida, when that afternoon he called upon her, exclaimed:

"What's the matter? You know you aren't looking well. One would think Peter was dead."

"You've got," he said, "to put on your things and come and see them off at the station."

"I!" she protested, "what are they to me?"

He passed his hand over his forehead.

"I've got to go," he said. "I don't want to, but I've got to. I've got to see the last of Pauline."

Ellida said: "*Oh!*"

"It's not," he answered, "a question of what you are to them, but of what I am to you. You're the only sister I've got in the world."

Ellida was walking up to him to put her hands upon his shoulders.

"Yes, dear," she was beginning with the note of tenderness in her voice.

"And," he interrupted her, "you're the only sister that Katya's got in the world. If I've arranged this marriage, it's for your sake, to keep myself for Katya."

She gave a little indrawing of the breath.

"Oh, Toto, dear," she said painfully, "is it as bad as that?"

"It's as bad as that. It's worse," he answered.

"Then don't go," she pleaded. "Stop away. What's the use of it?"

"I can't," he said numbly. "It's no use but I can't stop away," and he added in a fierce whisper: "Get your things on quickly. There's not much time. I can't answer for what will happen if you're not there to safeguard Katya's interests."

She shivered a little back from him.

"Oh, Toto," she said, "it's not that I'm thinking of. It's you, if you're in such pain."

"Be quick! Be quick!" he insisted.

Whilst she was putting on her furs she sent in to the room the small, dark, laughing and dumb Kitty. With steps of swift delight, with an air at once jolly and elfin, the small dark child in her white dress ran to catch hold of the lappets of her uncle's coat, but for the first time in his life Robert Grimshaw gazed out unseeing over his niece's head. He brushed her to one side, and began to walk feverishly down the room, his white teeth gleaming with an air of fierceness through the bluish black of his beard and moustache.

But even with their haste it was only by almost running along the platform beside the train that Ellida was able in the dusk to shake the hands of Dudley Leicester and his wife. Grimshaw himself stood behind her, his own hands behind his back. And Ellida had a vision, as slowly the train moved, of a little death-white childish face, of a pair of blue eyes that gazed as if from the face of Death himself, over her

shoulder. And then whilst she fumbled with the flowers in her breast Pauline Leicester suddenly sank down, her head falling back amongst the cushions and at the last motion of her hand she dropped on to the platform the small bunch of violets. Ellida leaned forward with a quick and instinctive gesture of rescue.

"She's fainted," she exclaimed. "Oh, *poor* child."

The train glided slowly and remorselessly from the platform and for a long time Robert Grimshaw watched it dwindling out of the shadow of the high station into the shadows of the falling November dusk, until they were all alone on the platform. And suddenly Robert Grimshaw ground the little bunch of flowers beneath his heel, vindictively, his teeth showing as they bit his lower lip.

"Toto!" Ellida exclaimed in a tone of sharp terror and anguish. "Why did she throw them to you? She shouldn't have. But why do you do that?"

His voice came harshly from his throat.

"They were my flowers—my gift. She was throwing them away. Hadn't you the sense to see that?" and his voice was cruel. She recoiled minutely, but at his next action she came swiftly forward, her hands outstretched as if to stop him. He had picked up the violets, his lips moving silently. He touched with them each of his wrists, each of his eyes, his lips, and his heart.

"Oh, don't," she said, "you aren't serious. You can't be serious," for, as it seemed to her semi-ironically, her cousin was going through a Greek incantation that they had been told of by their old Greek nurse.

"You can't *want* to retain that poor little thing's affections."

"Serious!" Robert Grimshaw muttered.

"Oh, Robert," she said. "What have you done it for? If she's so frightfully in love with you and you're so frightfully in love with her . . . and you've only got to look at her face to see. I never saw such misery. Isn't it horrible to think of them steaming away together?"

Robert Grimshaw clenched his teeth firmly.

"What did I do it for?" he said.

His eyes wandered over the form of a lady who passed them in earnest conversation with a porter.

"That woman's going to drop her purse out of her muff," he said; and then he added sharply: "I didn't know what it would mean. No, I didn't know what it would mean. It's the sort of thing that's done every day. But it's horrible."

"It's horrible," Ellida repeated. "You oughtn't to have done it. It's true I stand for Katya, but if you wanted that child so much and she wanted you so dreadfully wasn't it your business to have made her happy and yourself? If I'd known *I* shouldn't have stood in the way. Not even for Katya's sake. She's no claim—none that can be set against a feeling like that. She's gone away. She's shown no sign."

She stopped and then she uttered suddenly:

"Oh, Robert, you oughtn't to have done it. No good can come of it."

He turned upon her sharply.

"Upon my word," he said, "you talk like an old-fashioned shopkeeper's wife. 'Nothing but harm can come of it.' What have we arrived at in our day and our class if we haven't learnt to do what we want: to do what seems proper and expedient—and to take what we get for it."

They turned and went slowly up the long platform.

"Oh, our day and our class," Ellida said slowly. "It would be better for Pauline to be the old-fashioned wife of a small shopkeeper than what she is—if she cared for him."

They were nearly at the barrier and he said:

"Oh, sentimentality. Sentimentality. I had to do what seemed best for us all—that was what I wanted. Now I'm taking what I get for it."

And he relapsed into a silence that lasted until they were nearly at home. And in her *coupé* Ellida, with the little deep wisdom of the woman of the household, sat beside him in a mood of wonder, of tenderness and of commiseration.

"And it's always like this," she seemed to feel in her wise, small bones. "There they are, these men of ours. We see them together, affable, smiling, gentle, composed. And we women have to make believe to their faces and to each other that they're towers of strength and all-wise as they like to make out that they are. We see them taking action that they think is strong and forcible and masculine and that we know is utterly mad, and we have to pretend to them and to each other that we agree in placid confidence and then we go home, each one of us with our husbands or our brothers and the strong masculine creature breaks down, groans and drags us after him hither and thither in his crises when he has to pay for his folly. And that's life. And that's love. And that's the woman's part. And that's all there is to it."

It is not to be imagined that Ellida did anything so unsubtle as to put these feelings of hers, even to herself, into words. They

found vent only in the way her eyes, compassionate and maternal, rested on his brooding face. Indeed, the only words she uttered, either to herself or to him, were, with deep concern—he had taken off his hat to ease the pressure of the blood in his brows—as she ran her fingers gently through his hair :

"Poor old Toto !"

He remained lost in his abstraction, until they were almost at her door. Then he squared his shoulders and resumed his hat.

"Yet I'm sure I was right," he said. "Just consider what it was up to me to do. You've got to think that I don't by any means care for Katya less. I want her for myself. But I want to see to it that Pauline has a good time and I want to see her having it."

"How can she have it if you've given her Dudley Leicester when she wants you ?"

"My dear child," he answered, and he had become again calm, strong, and infinitely lofty. "Don't you understand that's how Society has to go on. It's the sort of thing that's got to happen to make us the civilised people that we are. Dudley's the best fellow in the world : I'm sure he's the best fellow in the world. I know everything he's ever done and every thought he's ever thought for the last twenty years and everything that Pauline wants him to do in this world he'll do. She'll make a man of him. She'll give him a career. He'll be her life's work. And if you can't have what you want the next best thing is to have a life's work that's worth doing, that's engrossing, that keeps you from thinking about what you haven't got."

Ellida refrained from saying what a different thing it was, and with his air of tranquil wisdom he went on :

"We're all—all of us in our class and our day, doing the same thing. Every one of us really wants the moon and we've got somehow to get on with just the earth and behave ourselves. I suppose what I really want is both Katya and Pauline. That sort of thing is probably in our blood—yours and mine—and no doubt in the great days of our race I should have had both of them, but I've got to sacrifice physical possession of one of them to the amenities of a civilisation that's pleasant enough and that's taken thousands of years to bring together. We're the children of the Age and of all the Ages, and if at times it's painful we've got to get over the pain somehow. This is done with. You won't see me wince again, not ever. It's my business in life just to wait for Katya and to see that Pauline has a good time."

Ellida did not say :

"You mean, in fact to keep as much as you want of both of them?" She said instead:

"What's wanted is that Katya should come back from Philadelphia to look after you. You need to be looked after by a woman and I'm going to get her."

"Oh, yes, I need to be looked after," he said. And he added:

"But you know, dear, you do it splendidly."

She nodded in the very least.

"Yes," she said, "but you need to be looked after by at least two of us and to have the whole time of at least one. I've got Paul and I've got Kitty as well as you." She added to herself: "Katya will be able to manage you with my hints. I don't believe she could without if she is anything like the passionate darling she used to be." And she concluded out aloud: "It's Kitty that's going to bring her back from Philadelphia. I've had my trump card up my sleeve for some time, but I haven't wanted to interfere in matters with two such volcanoes as you and she really are. It seemed too much of a responsibility. And I've sort of felt that a little person like Pauline was the person who ought to have *married* you. I know it now. You ought to have married Pauline and given her a good time. Then you could have gone on waiting for Katya till the end of the chapter."

Robert Grimshaw said: "Oh!"

"But you're in," she shut him up, "such a hopeless pickle as it is that I don't believe even Katya, darling as she is, could make you any worse. So that if she comes back you'd better just take her on her own terms and make the very best of it."

III

Pauline Leicester's mother's cottage had only one spare bedroom. It stood in the New Forest, some seven miles from Brockenhurst with no house nearer it than just that seven miles. And Mrs. Lucas, the mother of Pauline Leicester, suffered from angina pectoris. She was a little, pleasant woman with the greatest tact that was ever known: she played a variety of Patiences and she had one very attached servant. But, little and pleasant and patient and tactful, she suffered very much pain.

It was not indeed angina pectoris but pneumonia that brought the Leicesters down in March. . . .

"And, poor dear," Pauline said to her husband, "no one knows what she has borne. And now . . ."

She was sitting alone opposite Leicester in the railway carriage : she was still in furs, for March was by no means done with, and the black, grey-tipped hairs encircling her porcelain cheeks and chin, the black, grey-tipped furs crowning her brow that was like soft and translucent china, she leaned back in the seat and was so tiny that her feet did not touch the floor. Her brows curved out over her eyes ; their lashes curved out and upwards so that she had an expression of being a newly awakened and wondering child, and about her lips there hovered always one of those faint ghosts of smiles that are to other smiles as the faint odour of *pot pourri* is to the scent of roses. Her husband called her " Puff-Ball " because he said a breath of wind would scatter her like an odorous smoke, gone in a second ; but she had acquired her faint smile whilst tending five very robust children when she had been a nursery governess. She was twenty-three.

" You see," she went on, " it was always mother's ambition —her secret ambition—to have a white pony and a basket-work open chaise. It must be a white pony and a basket-work chaise. You know the New Forest's the place where all admirals go to die, and all their widows always set up these chaises, just as all the admirals always have parrots. Not that I ever considered mother as a widow. I suppose that was because I hardly saw her at all in her weeds, and I hardly ever saw her with my father. And yet she was in such an agony of fear whenever the wind blew—or when the weather was fine. When it blew in the Forest it used to remind her that there might be wind at sea : when it was dead calm she was always convinced that that meant that there was a particularly vicious cyclone somewhere else. She always seemed most characteristic when she was sitting bolt upright, with one hand close to her heart—listening. And I don't think she was the woman for father. He was so big and grizzled and loud and romantic. He used to shout at her : 'What'd a puff of wind do to a first-class cruiser ? What'd it do, d'you think ? '—It wasn't that he wasn't prouder of her than you are of me. Why, I've seen him take her up in his arms and hoist her towards the ceiling, as if she had been a baby—and roar with laughter. But I don't think that was very good for mother. And you know she got her first touch of heart-trouble when the *Victoria* was rammed. She was in Lyndhurst and read it on the placards : '*Flagship sunk : Admiral and six hundred lives lost.*' She put her hand over her heart and fell over backwards. Oh ! poor dear ! "

Pauline looked at her husband.

"Yes, old boy," she said, "you don't know what we women have to suffer."

He was like a large, pleased spaniel assaulted by a Persian kitten. He was so slow that he seemed never to get a word out: he was so happy that he never made the effort. He had promised to stand for Mid-Kent when they had been married one year because she declared that he needed an occupation and would be tired of her prattle. She said she could hold him a year: after that he'd have to go out of the house. And indeed she ran on and on, but it was pleasant enough to hear her as she thought aloud, her mind linking up topic to topic.

"Yes," she said, "there were father's speculations that were as bad for her as the winds on the sea. He'd roar out: 'I never put into anything in any one year more than three-fifths of my year's screw. I never did and I never will. And the wheel's bound to turn right side up!' But it never did and it never would. And he had expensive tastes, and there was me to dress. And I've seen him sitting with his chin between his hands. So that when he died his coffin stood in an empty house—the brokers had cleared it that day. And I was at the Brigstocks'—up in the nursery."

Dudley Leicester swore suddenly at Fate that had so misused his Puff-Ball.

"I've never really told you this," Pauline said, "though I daresay you knew it."

"I never knew it," he said. "By God I'd like to . . . well: the most I knew was I heard the Brigstocks only gave you three days for your father's funeral, and cut it off your holidays next summer."

"Well, I've got to thank them that I never really think of mother as a widow. I'm glad of that and there *were* five children in the nursery and only me to look after them."

Mr. Leicester muttered beneath his breath that they were cursed hogs.

"Well, I've got to thank them for *you!*" she said. "For if Mr. Grimshaw hadn't come up into the nursery—if he hadn't been so fond of children—he'd never have seen me and so he'd never have helped mother to patch up her impossible affairs, and get her compassionate allowance and keep out of rooms in Hampton Court that she dreaded so. *You'd* never have come to Hampton Court. You've never been to Hampton Court in your life."

"I *have*," Dudley Leicester asseverated. "When I was a kid I scratched a wart off my hand on the hollies in the maze.

—There's the scar on the little finger, and I wish you'd call him Robert, I've told you so, many times. It's deuced had form to call him Mr. Grimshaw."

Pauline's lower lip curved inwards.

" Anyhow, mother's ambition to have a pony was a secret all the time."

" She might have had fifty ponies if I'd known," Leicester said.

" But you were engaged to Etta Stackpole all the while," Pauline mocked him. " You know you'd have married her if she had not flirted with the boot-blacks. You've told me so many times ! And anyhow, she didn't want fifty ponies ; she only wanted one. And now I'm off her hands and she's been able to get one—there comes this . . ."

For Mrs. Lucas, driving out with her pony for the third time in the Forest, the pony—white, with extreme age—had fallen and lay still and a March storm had come sweeping up from the Solent. So that there was the pneumonia.

" And the only reason I tell you all this," Pauline said, " is to make you very quiet and good and careful not to knock things over because it's such a tiny box of a place and you're such a clumsy creature, and falling crockery is so bad for a weak heart. I should say it's worse than sudden death or runaway marriages . . ."

But Dudley Leicester had no chance of breaking his mother-in-law's china—he was fond of standing before her little mantel-shelf and, with a motion of his shoulder-blades, knocking her blue vases into the fender, and his dismal contrition then had always been almost worse for Mrs. Lucas' nerves than the actual crash and collision. He had no chance because the little cottage was full to overflowing. There were two nurses in attendance ; there were a doctor and a specialist at the moment of the Leicesters' arrival and there was only one spare bedroom and only one servant. And there was no other dwelling-place within seven miles. Dudley Leicester was left to imagine that it was the cold, calm, close-lipped nurses in their white aprons that seemed to stand out so stiffly, to take up so much space, and with their rustlings so to fill the tiny house—that it was they who sent the quite dismal Dudley Leicester back to town. But though she never let him suspect it, or the shadow of it, it was Pauline. With the secret consciousness that his presence, though he never went near the sick-room, was a constant torture to her mother—it was Pauline who really ejected him from the cottage,

who put against the fact that he was willing to sleep on the sofa or in the loft over the white pony's stable, the other fact that Ann the servant was terribly overworked already, with so many extra beds to make, meals to cook and plates to wash up. In fact, gay and brave and pleading, Pauline put her hands on her husband's chest and pushed him backwards out of the crowded house. And he never realised that it was she who did it.

IV

So tall that he looked over most men's heads, so strong that his movements must be for ever circumscribed and timid, Dudley Leicester had never in his life done anything—he had not even been in the Guards. Least of all did he ever realise personal attitudes in those around him. The minute jealousies, the very deep hatreds and the strong passions that swelled in his particular world of deep idleness, of high feeling and of want of occupation—in this world where, since no man had any need of anything to do, there were so many things to feel—Dudley Leicester perceived absolutely nothing, no complexities, no mixed relationships. To him a man was a man, a woman a woman; the leader in a newspaper was a series of convincing facts, of satisfying views and of final ideals. Belonging as he did to the governing classes, Dudley Leicester had not even the one outlet for passion that is open to these highly groomed and stall-fed creatures. The tradition of the public service was in his blood. He owned a slice of his kingdom that was more than microscopic on the map. But though he had come into his great possessions at the age of twenty-seven he made no effort whatever to put things straight, since he had more than enough to satisfy his simple needs, to provide him with a glass bath and silver taps, to pay his subscription at his club, to give him his three cigars a day, his box at a music-hall once a week, his month on the Riviera—and to leave him a thousand or two over every year, which was the fact most worrying to his existence.

It was Robert Grimshaw who set his estates in order, who found him a young, hard Steward with modern methods, who saw to it that he built additions to several Church schools, and who directed the Steward to cut down the rent on over-burdened farms, to raise other rents, to provide allotments, to plant heavy land with trees and to let the shootings to real advantage. It was, indeed, Robert Grimshaw who raised Dudley Leicester's income to figures that in other circumstances Leicester would have found intolerable. But, on the other hand, it was Robert

Grimshaw who put all the surplus back into the estates, who had all the gates rehung, all the hedges replanted, all the roofs of the barns ripped and retiled and all the cottages rebuilt. And it was Robert Grimshaw who provided him with his Pauline.

So that at thirty-two, with a wife whom already people regarded as likely to be the making of him, a model landlord, perfectly sure of a seat in the House, without a characteristic of any kind or an enemy in the world there, gentle and exquisitely groomed Dudley Leicester was a morning or so after his return to town. Standing in front of his mantel-shelf in a not too large dining-room of Curzon Street he surveyed his breakfast-table with an air of immense indifference, of immense solitude and of immense want of occupation. His shoulder-blades rubbed the glass front of the clock, his hand from time to time lightly pulled his moustache, his face was empty but with an emptiness of depression. He had nothing in the world to do. Nothing whatever !

So that turning round to take a note from the frame of the mirror behind him was positively an action of immense importance. He hadn't a visit to pay to his tailor ; there wouldn't be at his club or in the Park any one that he wanted to be talked to by. The one bright spot in this day was the P— exercise that he would take just before lunch in his bathroom before the open window. This interested him. This really engrossed him. It engrossed him because of his docility, his instructor having told him that, unless he paid an exact attention to each motion of his hands and wrists, the exercises would cause him no physical benefit whatever. He longed immensely for physical benefit, for he suffered from constant panics and ideas of ill-health. He remembered that he had an aunt who had been a consumptive, therefore he dreaded tuberculosis : he had read in some paper that the constant string of vehicles passing us in the streets of London so acted on the optic nerves that general paralysis was often induced. Therefore sometimes he walked along the streets with his eyes shut ; he instructed his chauffeur to drive him from place to place only by way of back streets and secluded squares, and he abandoned the habit of standing in the window of his club which overlooked Piccadilly. Because Pauline, by diverting his thoughts, diverted also these melancholy forebodings he imagined that marriage had done him a great deal of good. The letter that he took from the mantel-shelf contained an invitation from the Phyllis Trevors to dine that night at the Equator Club and to go afterwards to the Esmeralda, the front row of whose stalls Phyllis Trevor had engaged. That

matter was one for deep and earnest consideration since Dudley Leicester had passed his last three evenings at the place of entertainment in question, and was beginning to feel himself surfeited with its particular attractions. Moreover, the Phyllis Trevors informed him that Etta Stackpole—now Lady Hudson—was to be one of the party. But, on the other hand, if he didn't go to the Phyllis Trevors where in the world was he to spend his evening ?

Promptly upon his return to town he had despatched letters to the various more stately houses where he and Pauline were to have dined—letters excusing himself and his wife on account of the extreme indisposition of his wife's mother. He dreaded in fact to go to a dinner alone : he was always afraid of being taken ill between the soup and the fish ; he suffered from an unutterable shyness, he was intolerably afraid of " making an ass of himself." He felt safe however as long as Pauline had her eyes on him. But the Phyllis Trevors' dinners were much more like what he called " a rag." If he felt an uncontrollable impulse to do something absurd—to balance, for instance, a full glass on the top of his head, or to flip drops of wine at his neighbour's bare shoulders nobody would be seriously perturbed. It was not necessary to do either of these things, but you might if you wanted to, and all the Phyllis Trevors' women could be trusted either to put up the conversation for you or—which was quite as good—to flirt prodigiously with their neighbours on the other side. The turning-point of his deliberations, which lasted exactly three-quarters of an hour, the actual impulse which sent him out of the room to the telephone in the hall, came from the remembrance that Pauline had made him promise not to be an irrational idiot.

He had promised to go out to *some* dinners and it was only dinners of the Phyllis Trevors' sort that he could bring himself to face. So that, having telephoned his acceptance to Mrs. Trevor, who called him the Great Chief Long-in-the-fork and wanted to know why his voice sounded like an undertaker's mute, a comparative tranquillity reigned in Dudley Leicester's soul. This tranquillity was only ended when at the dinner-table he had at his side, red-lipped, deep-voiced, black-haired, large, warm, scented and utterly uncontrollable, Etta Stackpole. She had three dark red roses in her hair.

V

Etta Stackpole—now Lady Hudson—had been Dudley Leicester's first and very ardent passion. She was very much his age, and commencing in a boy and girl affair the engagement

had lasted many years. She was the only daughter of the Stackpoles of Cove Place and she had all the wilfulness of an only daughter and all the desperate acquisitiveness of the Elizabethan freebooters from whom she was descended. Robert Grimshaw said once that her life was a series of cutting-out expeditions: her maids used to declare that they certainly could not trust their young men in the hall if Miss Etta was likely to come down the stairs. It was, perhaps, her utter disrespect for the dictates of class that made Dudley Leicester finally and quite suddenly break off from her.

It was not exactly the case that he had caught her flirting with a boot-black. The man was the son of the farrier at Cove and he had the merit of riding uncommonly straight to hounds. Dudley Leicester—one of those men who are essentially monogamous—had suffered unheard-of agonies at hunt balls, in grand stands; he had known the landscape near the park to look like hell: he had supported somehow innumerable Greshams, Hewards, Traceys, Stackpole cousins and Boveys. But the name of Bugle stuck in his gorge: "Bugle, Farrier," was printed in tarnished gold capitals over the signboard of the vet.'s front door! It had made him have a little, sick feeling that he had never had before. And that same afternoon Etta's maid Agnes had come to him, her cheeks distorted with pitiful rage to ask him for mercy's sake to marry Miss Etta soon or she herself would never get married. She said that her young man—her third young man that it had happened to—had got ideas above his place because of the way Miss Etta spoke to him whilst he waited at table. So that it wasn't even only the farrier: it was the third footman too. His name was Moddle . . .

That very afternoon—it had been six years before—Dudley Leicester had announced his departure. He had, indeed, announced it to the maid Agnes first of all. It broke out of him, such a hot rage overcoming him that he, too, very tall and quivering, forgot the limits of class.

"I'm sorry for you, Agnes," he had blurted out: "I'm sorry for myself: but I shall never marry Miss Stackpole." The girl had taken her apron down from her eyes to jump for joy. And very gradually—the process had taken years—hot rage had given way to slow dislike and that to sullen indifference.

He sat at her side at the dinner-table and she talked to him—about concerts! She had a deep, a moving, a tragic voice and when she talked to her neighbour it was with so much abandonment always that she appeared to be about to lay her head upon his black shoulder and to rest her white breasts upon the table-cloth.

She perfumed herself always with a peculiar, musky scent that her father, years ago, had discovered in Java.

"Bodya," she would say, "has the tone of heaven itself; it's better than being at the best after-theatre supper in the world with the best man in the world. But he uses his bow like a cobbler stitching. If I shut my eyes La Jeuiva makes me use all the handkerchiefs I can get hold of. *Real* tears! . . . But to look at she's like a bad kodak: over-exposed and under-developed. She shouldn't be so *décolletée*, and she ought to sing in a wood at night. We've had her do it down at Well-lands . . ."

"But," she added, "I daresay you never go to concerts now."

"I haven't been to one since the ones I went to with you," Dudley said grimly.

"Ah!" she said. "Don't you remember our last! It was a Monday Pop. We were passing through town, all the lot of us, from the East Kent to Melton. What a lot of frost there was that year! Don't you remember? It was so hard on the Monday that we didn't go down to the Shires, but stayed up instead. And there was the quartette with Joachim and Strauss and Ries and Piatti! I wonder what they played. I've got the programme still. Those quaint old green programmes! I'll look it up and let you know. But oh, it's all gone! They're all dead: There are no Pops now and St. James's Hall. . . . And yet it only seems yesterday. . . . Don't you remember how dear old Piatti's head looked exactly like the top of his 'cello in shape?"

Dudley Leicester, gazing rigidly at the table-cloth, was at that moment wondering how Etta Hudson got on with her footmen. For, as a matter of fact, Dudley Leicester's thoughts, if they were few and if they rose very slowly in his rather vacant mind, were yet almost invariably of a singular justness. He had broken off the habit of Etta Stackpole, who, like many troublesome but delightful things, had become a habit to be broken off. And Dudley Leicester had, as it were, chopped her off in the very middle because of a train of thought. She could carry on with the Traceys, the Greshams, the Stackpole cousins and the rest. If it pained him he could yet just bear it, for he imagined that he would be able to defend his hearth against them. But when it had come to Bugle the farrier's son and to Moddle the third footman, it had suddenly come into his head that you couldn't keep those creatures off your hearth. He knew it would be as impossible as it would be sickening. . . .

So whilst Etta Stackpole talked he had been wondering, not only how Lady Hudson got on with her footman, but how Sir

William liked it. Sir William Hudson was the Managing Director of the Great Southern Railway Company. As far as Dudley Leicester knew he passed his time in travelling from one end of the world to the other, whilst Etta carried on her cutting-out expeditions from a very snug harbour in Curzon Street, or from the very noble property known as Well-lands in Surrey. But indeed, although the Leicesters and the Hudsons lived in the same street, their points of contact were almost non-existent, and since their rupture Dudley Leicester and Etta Stackpole had never met. His mother, who had managed his estate a little too economically till her death three years ago, had let Hangham, the Leicesters' place, which was just next door to Cove Park, and Etta, perhaps because she thought it was full time, or perhaps because she had stipulated for some agreeable arrangement with Sir William, had almost immediately "made a match" with the Director of Railways. And although it would be hard to say what was Dudley Leicester's "line" we may put it down in his own words that railway directors were not in it. But vaguely and without much interest, at odd moments Dudley Leicester had gathered—it is impossible to know how one does gather these things, or perhaps Robert Grimshaw had really formulated the idea for his simple brain—that the Hudsons were one of several predatory and semi-detached couples. They didn't interfere apparently with each other. They hit where they liked, like what used to be called "chain shot," dangerous missiles consisting of two cannon-balls chained one to the other and whirling through Society. Robert Grimshaw had certainly gained this impression from his two friends the Senhora de Bogota and Madame de Mauvesine, the wives of two of the Diplomatic Body in London, two ladies who, though they were upon the most intimate of terms with Etta Hudson, were yet in a perpetual state of shocked and admiring envy. It was as if, witnessing Etta's freedom, these ladies of Latin origin and comparatively circumscribed liberties, rubbed their eyes and imagined that they had been allowed to witness scenes from a fairyland—from a veritable Island of the Blessed. They couldn't imagine how it was possible to be married and to be yet so absolutely free. They couldn't, indeed, imagine how it was possible to be so absolutely free in any state, whether married, single or anything else. And, indeed, Senhora de Bogota, at that moment opposite them at the table, was leaning across the little blonde man who was always known as Mr. "Phyllis" Trevor for much the same reason that Dudley Leicester came afterwards to be known as Mr. "Pauline" Leicester—Senhora de Bogota

was leaning a splendid mass of dark and opulent flesh across her diminutive neighbour's form to whisper with a strong Brazilian accent to Madame de Mauvesine :

" Regardez donc cette Etta ! Ces Anglaises, a-t-on jamais vu rien de pareilles ! "

And Madame de Mauvesine, blonde with coppery hair and a peaked almost eel-like face, raised her eyes to the ceiling that was painted to resemble a limpid blue sky filled with chains of roses and gambolling cherubs.

VI

Etta Stackpole raised herself in the hansom that carried them from the Esmeralda. She lifted her white hand above the roof, and the horse, checked suddenly, came to a vacillating halt at the kerb. They were midway in the curve of Regent Street and it was about half-past twelve of a fine night.

" We're getting home much too fast," she said to the wordless Dudley Leicester. " There's such oceans to remember yet."

It was as if, years before, he had been married—to a masterful woman. He could no more control her to-day than he could then. He saw her bend forward, lithe, large and warm, push open the apron of the cab, and, the next moment, she was on the pavement. He thought so slowly that he had no time to think anything at all before he found himself, too, on the kerbstone, reaching up coins to the shadowy and thankful driver.

" I say, you know," he said, " if anybody saw us . . ."

She hooked herself on to his arm.

" I don't believe," she said, " that I *did* shriek on the switchback at Earl's Court. It's seventeen years ago now and I was only fourteen at the time. But I've always said I never shrieked in my life. She moved herself half round him, so that she seemed about to hide him in her black dress and hood, in order to gaze into his face. Her features appeared long, white and seductive ; her voice was very deep and full of chords.

" Whatever you can say against me . . ." she began and paused.

Regent Street was very much as empty or as full as it always is at that hour, the tall lamps sparking, the hoofs of very few horses sounding in cadence to innumerable whispers in polyglot tongues.

" You don't know who will see us," Dudley repeated. He was conscious that, as they passed, groups and individuals swung round to gaze upon them.

"Whatever you may say against me," her deep voice came, "you can't say I've ever been untruthful, and I've always said I never shrieked in my life."

"You did then," Dudley Leicester asseverated. "And we were alone in the car: it was not any one else."

They were at the top of Vigo Street and suddenly she swung him round.

"Oh, if you're afraid to be seen," she said, "let's go down the back streets. They're as empty as sin and as black. As to my shrieking, you can't prove it. But I *can* prove that you called me a penguin in your last nice letter to me."

In the black and tortuous streets, in the chilly and silent night, her warmth, as she clung to him, seemed to envelope him and her subtle and comfortable Eastern perfume was round them, as it were an invisible cloud. He seemed to hang back a little and she, leaning her body forward, her face back to him, to draw him along as in a picture a nymph might lead away a stripling into scented obscurities, into leafy woods.

"I might say," Dudley Leicester was urged to a sudden lucidity, "that I couldn't have called you a penguin because I never rightly knew what a penguin was."

"Oh, but you did once," she said. "It is one of the things you have forgotten." She laughed. "So many things you had forgotten, but you are remembering them now."

She laughed again.

"Now you'll remember how you came to know what a penguin was. On that day—the day of the evening we went to the Monday Pop—we went to the Zoo. It was you who wanted to go there to be alone with me: you considered that the Zoo in that weather would be the most solitary place in London. The hard frost that it was! Colder than this. Colder than you are now. You're thawing a little, you stiff creature . . ."

She shivered under her cloak.

"We stopped most of the time with the monkeys, but we saw the penguins too. Don't you remember?"

"I don't," he answered. "I don't want to. It would not have been like me to call you a penguin. You're not like one."

"Ah!" she said, "when you're in love you don't bother about likenesses. I'll bet you called your wife a penguin before you married her. Or a toothbrush. Or a puff-ball. I've heard that men always transfer their pet names from woman to woman."

He attempted to blurt out that she was to leave Pauline out of it but she cried:

"Oh, you traitor! You *have* called her one of these names. Couldn't you have kept them sacred? Isn't anything sacred to a man? I loved you so and you loved me. And then . . ."

The memory of their past lives came suddenly over him.

"Go away," she said. "Go away."

"I must see you to your door," he muttered with a sense of guilt and stood irresolutely, for she had torn her arm from his.

"I don't want you," she called out. "Can't I walk twenty steps without you?" And she began to glide swiftly away, with him doggedly on the very edge of the pavement beside her.

Suddenly she slackened her steps.

"What did you give me up for, Dudley Leicester?" she said. "What did you do it for? I cared more for your little finger than for all the heads of all the other men. You knew it well enough. You know it now. You *feel* like a coward. Don't tell me you feared for the sanctity of your hearth. You knew me well enough. What I was then, I am now."

She paused and then she brought out:

"I've always wanted men about me, and I mean to have them. You never heard me say a good word for a woman and I never did say one. I shouldn't even of your wife. But I am Etta Stackpole, I tell you. The world has got to give me what I want, for it can't get on without me. Your women might try to down me but your men wouldn't allow it."

Dudley Leicester murmured apologetically, feeling himself a hypocrite: "Why should any one want to down you?"

"The women would," she answered. "If ever my name got into the papers they'd manage it too. But that will never happen. You know women are quite powerless until your name does get into the papers. Mine never will. That's as certain as eggs is eggs. And even if it did there's half the hostesses in London would try to bolster me up. Where would their dinners be—where would the Phyllis Trevors be if they hadn't me for an attraction?"

". . . I'm telling you all this, Dudley," she said, "just to show you what you've missed. You're a bit of a coward, Dudley Leicester, and you threw me over in a panic. You're subject to panics, now, aren't you?—about your liver and the like? But when you threw me over, Dudley, it was the cowardliest thing you ever did."

Walking at her side, now that she had repulsed him, Dudley Leicester had the sensation of being deserted and cold. He had, too, the impulse to offer her his arm again, and the desire to come once more within the circle of warmth and perfume that she

threw out. The quiet, black, deserted streets, with the gleam from lamps in the shining black glass of windows, the sound of his footsteps—for her tread was soundless as if she moved without stepping—the cold, the solitude, all these things and her deep-thrilled voice took him out of himself as if into some other plane. It was perhaps into a plane of the past, for that long, early stage of his life cast again its feeling over him. He tried to remember Pauline : but it was with a sense of duty and memory will not act at the bidding of duty.

No man indeed can serve two women—no man at any rate who is essentially innocent and who is essentially monogamous as was Dudley Leicester.

". . . The cowardliest thing you ever did in your life," he heard her repeat, and it was as if in trying to remember Pauline he were committing a new treachery to Etta Stackpole.

". . . For it wasn't because you were afraid of my betraying you—you knew I shouldn't betray you—it was because you were afraid of what the other women would say. You knew I should be justified in my actions but you were afraid of their appearance. You're a hypochondriac, Dudley Leicester. You had a panic. One day you will have a panic and it will pay you out for dropping me. It'll do more than pay you out. You think you've taken a snug sort of refuge in the arms of a little wife who might be a nun out of a convent, but it'll find you."

Dudley Leicester swore inwardly because there was an interval of a sob in her rounded speech. He experienced impulses to protest, to apologise, to comfort her. She became the only thing in the world.

" And it's because you know how bitterly you wronged me," she continued, " that you behaved gloomily towards me. I wouldn't have spoken like this if you hadn't been such an oaf at dinner, but it's up to me : you put it up to me and I'm doing it. If you'd played the game—if you had pretended to be cordial, or even if you'd been really a little sheepish, I might have spared you. Now you've got to see it through."

" But no," she added suddenly, " here endeth the first lesson. I think you've had enough gruel."

" All the same," she added as suddenly and quite gaily, " you *did* call me a penguin in the last nice letter you wrote me."

He was by now so far back into his past that he seemed to be doing no more than " see Etta home "—as he had seen her home a thousand times before. It only added to the reality of it that she had suddenly reconciled herself to him after fiercely upbraid-

ing him. For, when they had been engaged, she had upbraided him as fiercely at least a hundred times—after each of her desperate flirtations when he had been filled with gloom. And always—always—just as now, she had contrived to put him in the wrong. Always, after these quarrels, he had propitiated her with a little present of no value.

And suddenly he found himself thinking that next day he would send her a bunch of jonquils !

He was indeed as guileless as a puppy : he was just " seeing Etta home " again. And he had always seen her home before with such an innocence of tender passion, that once more the tenderness arose in him. It found its vent in his saying :

" You know you'll catch cold if you let your hood fall back like that."

" Then put it up for me," she said saucily.

Her hood had fallen on to her shoulders and in the March night her breasts gleamed. Both her hands were occupied with her skirts : he trembled—as he had been used to tremble—when his hands touched her warm and scented hair whose filaments caressed his wrists. In the light of a lamp her eyes gleamed mockingly.

" Do you remember the riddle with the rude answer ? " she asked suddenly : " about the hare. There was a hare in a pit, sixty feet deep, and there was no way out and a greyhound was let into it. How did the hare escape ? And the answer was : ' That's the hare's business.' "

She had hooked herself on to his arm again.

" What's that got to do with it ? " he asked, blinking.

" Oh ! " she answered, " I was only thinking : it is the hare's business, you know. That means that you can't really get away from your past. It comes back again. Do you remember a French story called ' Toutes les Amoureuses ? ' . . . about a man who had hundreds of adventures. And of each lady he kept a ribbon or a lock of hair, or a shoebuckle—some trifle. And once a year he used to lock his door and take out these odds and ends—and remember—just remember ! Well, Mr. Dudley Leicester, that's a good thing to do. It's an act of piety for one thing : it averts evil for another. It's like touching for the evil chance. If you'd done that for me—for my sake, because you had a good slice of my life—if you had done it . . . Well ! You'd not have been so desperately unhappy now."

" I'm not unhappy," he said, and he spoke the truth.

" Aren't you ? " she mocked him. " Aren't you ? "

They were within a few steps of her door, almost opposite

where, black and silent, his own house awaited him, as if, reproachfully, it gazed at him with darkened eyes. And suddenly, she burst into a carol and, with quickened steps, she danced him onwards :

"He called me a penguin : a penguin : a penguin :
He called me a penguin a long time ago."

She sang it to the triumphant lilt of "Voici le sabre !"

And then they were on her doorstep. She had her key in the latch, the door went back into darkness.

"I'll prove to you you called me that," she said, and crouching forward, as she had bent to open the door, she caught the end of his sleeve and pulled him into the inner darkness. He could see nothing and the heavy door was closed behind him.

PART II

I

And suddenly, in the thick darkness, whirring as if it were a scream, intermitted for a moment and again commencing, a little bell rang out at Dudley Leicester's elbow. As suddenly but with a more gracious diffusion, light welled down from above his head and Etta Hudson's voice mingling with it :

"Stop that confounded thing ! I don't want all the servants in the house to know you are here."

She leaned over the white and ormolu banisters : the light swinging over her head made a halo above her disordered hair ; her white shoulders gleamed.

"Stop it," she said. "Don't fumble so ridiculously. Don't you know how to take the thing off the hooks ?"

She laughed at him derisively ; her face disappeared as if she were about to continue her upward journey. Then once more she was looking down at him :

"Tell whoever it is," she said, "that Sir William is in Paris and Lady Hudson in bed. Say "sir" when you speak and they'll think it's the second footman, Moddle ! Don't you remember Moddle ?" And again she laughed and her ascent of the stairs was marked by the tips of her fingers, visible as if they were little white and creeping mice.

Dudley Leicester put the receiver to his ear. A peremptory "Are you 4259 Mayfair ?" made him suddenly afraid as if a schoolmaster had detected him in some crime. Hitherto

he had had no feeling of crime. It was as if he had merely existed in the tide of his senses. An equally peremptory " Don't go away " was succeeded by the words " Get down," and :

" Is that Sir William Hudson's ? "

Leicester answered—he had the words clearly fixed in his mind—but already he was panting :

" Yes, but Sir William's in Paris and Lady Hudson in bed."

And he did not omit to add " sir."

Through his mind, quickened by his emotions of fear, there shot the idea that now they must go away, that it was all over, that he was very tired, that he must sit down and rest.

Then suddenly, still low, distinct, stealthy and clear the voice of the invisible man asked :

" Isn't that Dudley Leicester speaking ? "

He answered " Yes " and then with a sudden panic he hung the receiver upon the hooks.

And Etta Hudson, descending the stair with the letter in her hand, saw him sitting dishevelled and dejected, as if all his joints had been broken, in the messenger-boy's chair beside the heavy, dark table.

He rose suddenly, exclaiming :

" You got me into this scrape : you've got to get me out of it. What's to be done ? "

Standing on the bottom step of the stairs she laughed at him and she laughed still more while she listened.

" How do I know who it was ? " He poured forth disjointed sentences. " I told you somebody would see us in Regent Street. It might have been your husband. Or some blackmailer. London's full of them. I can't possibly ring them up again to ask who it was. Perhaps they spoke from a call-office. What's to be done ? What in the name of God is to be done ? "

A certain concern and pity were visible in her eyes : she opened her lips and was about to speak when he exclaimed :

" It would break Pauline's heart. What's to be done ? "

The line of her brows hardened and she uttered a hard, little laugh.

" Don't you know," she said, " why, my dear Dudley, the answer is : ' That's the hare's business.' "

* * * * *

His first action on awakening was always to stretch out his hand for the letters that his silent man would have placed by his side and to glance at the clock on his dressing-table to see how many hours he had slept. And, indeed, next morning his first sensation was one of bodily well-being and of satisfaction because

the clock appeared to inform him that he had slept for three hours longer than was his habit. But with a slight feeling of uneasiness he remembered how late he had been the night before. And stretching out his hand for the letters he heard a voice say :

" Are you 4259 Mayfair ? "

He had answered " What ? " before he realised that this question was nothing more than a very vivid recollection. But even when he had assured himself that it was only a very vivid recollection he lay still and discovered that his heart was beating very quickly. And so afraid was he that the motion of stretching out his arm would bring again the voice to his ears, that he lay still, his hand stretched along the counterpane. And suddenly he got up.

He opened one white-painted cupboard, then the other. Finally he went to the door of the room and peered out. His man, expressionless, carrying over his arm a pair of trousers and in one hand a white letter crossed with blue, was slowly ascending the staircase at the end of the corridor.

" You didn't ask me a question ? " Dudley Leicester said. " About two minutes ago ? "

Saunders said :

" No, sir, I was answering the door to the postman. This, sir—" and he held out the registered letter.

It was as if Dudley Leicester recoiled from it. It bore Pauline's handwriting, a large, round, negligent scrawl.

" Did he ask our number ? " Dudley inquired eagerly, and Saunders, with as much of surprise as could come into his impassive face, answered :

" Why, no, sir. He's the regular man."

" Our telephone number, I mean," Dudley Leicester said.

Saunders was by this time in the room, passing through it to the door of the bath-cabinet.

" As a matter of fact, sir," he said, " the only thing he asked was whether Mrs. Leicester's mother was any better."

" It's very odd," Dudley Leicester answered.

And with Saunders splashing in the water in the white bath-cabinet, with a touch of sun lighting up the two white rooms—in the midst of these homely and familiar sounds and reflections, fear suddenly seized Dudley Leicester. His wife's letter frightened him ; when there fell from it a bracelet he started as he had never in his life started at a stumble of his horse. He imagined that it was a sort of symbol, a sending back of his gifts. And even when he had read her large, sparse words and discovered that the curb chain of the bracelet was broken and Pauline

desired him to take it to the jeweller's to be repaired—even then the momentary relief gave way to a host of other fears. For Dudley Leicester had entered into a world of dread.

II

He appeared to have become friendless and utterly solitary. Even his man Saunders, to whom he had been attached as he had been attached to his comfortable furniture and his comfortable boots, seemed to him now to have become reserved, frigid, disapproving. He imagined that Saunders had a threatening aspect. Fear suddenly possessed his heart when he perceived, seated in the breakfast-room, well forward in a deep saddle-bag chair, with Peter the dachshund between his speckless boots—Robert Grimshaw.

"What have you come for?" Leicester asked. "What's it about?"

Robert Grimshaw raised his dark, seal-like eyes and Leicester seemed to read in them reproof, judgment, condemnation.

"To leave Peter with the excellent Saunders," Robert Grimshaw said, "I can't take him to Athens."

"Oh, you're going to Athens?" Dudley Leicester said, and oddly it came into his mind that he was glad Grimshaw was going to Athens. He wanted Grimshaw not to hear of his disgrace.

For although Grimshaw had frequently spoken dispassionately of unfaithful husbands—dispassionately as if he were registering facts that are neither here nor there, facts that are the mere inevitabilities of life, he had the certainty—the absolute certainty—that Grimshaw would condemn him.

"I start at one, you know," Grimshaw said, "you're not looking very bright."

Dudley Leicester sat down before his coffee-pot, his hand with an automatic motion went out to the copy of the *Times* which was propped between the toast-rack and the cream-jug. But it suddenly shot back again, and with a hang-dog look in his eyes he said:

"How long does it take things to get into the newspapers?"

It was part of his sensation of loneliness and of fear that he could not any more consult Robert Grimshaw. He might ask him questions, but he couldn't tell just what question wouldn't give him away. Robert Grimshaw had so many knowledges. So that when Robert Grimshaw asked:

"What sort of things?" he answered with a little fluster of hurry and irritation:

"Oh, any sort of thing—the things they do print."

Grimshaw raised his eyelids.

"I don't see how I can be expected to know about newspapers," he said, "but I fancy they get printed about half-past one in the morning. About half-past one. I shouldn't imagine it was any earlier."

At this repetition, at this emphasis of the hour at which the telephone bell had rung, Dudley seized and opened his paper with a sudden eagerness. He had the conviction that it must have been a newspaper reporter who had rung him up and that by now the matter might well be in print. He looked feverishly under the heading of Court and Society and under the heading of Police Court and Divorce Court. But his eye could do no more than travel over the spaces of print and speckled paper as if it had been a patterned fabric. And suddenly he asked:

"Do you suppose the servants spy upon us?"

"Really, my dear fellow!" Grimshaw said. "Why can't you buy an encyclopædia of out-of-the-way things?"

"But *do* you?" Dudley insisted.

"I don't know," Grimshaw speculated. "Some do: some don't. It depends on their characters; on whether it would be worth their whiles. I've never heard of an authentic case of a servant blackmailing a master. But of course one would not hear of it."

"But your man Jervis? Or Saunders, now? They talk about us, for instance, don't they?"

Grimshaw considered the matter with his eyes half-closed.

"Jervis? Saunders?" he said. "Yes, I suppose they do. I *hope* they do. For we're their life's work and, if they take the interest in us that I presume they do, they ought to talk about us. I imagine Jervis discusses me now and then with his wife. I should think he does it affectionately on the whole. I don't know. . . . It's one of the few things that are as mysterious as life and death. There are these people always about us: all day: all night. They've got eyes. I suppose they use them. But we've got no means of knowing what they think, or what they know. I do know a lot—about other people. Jervis gives me the news while he's shaving me. So I suppose I know nearly all he knows about other people. He knows I like to know, and it's part of what he's paid for. But as for what he knows about me . . .!"—Grimshaw waved his hand as if he were flicking cigarette ash off his knee—"Why, I know nothing about that. We never can: we never shall. But we never can and we never shall know what any one in the world knows of us, and thinks.

You'll find, as you go on, that you'll never really know *all* that Pauline thinks of you—not quite all. I shall never really know all that you think about me. I suppose we're as intimate as men can be in this world : aren't we ? Well ! You're probably—at this very moment thinking something or other about me. Perhaps I'm boring you, or irritating you. But you won't tell me. And," he added, fixing his eyes gently and amiably upon Dudley Leicester's face, " you'll never know all I know about you."

Dudley Leicester had become filled with an impetuous dread that he had " given himself away " by his questions.

" Why I asked," he said, and his eyes avoided Grimshaw's glance, " is that the postman seems to have been talking to Saunders about Pauline."

Grimshaw started suddenly forward in his seat.

" Oh ! " Dudley Leicester said, " it's only that I asked Saunders about a voice I had heard and he said it was the postman asking when Pauline would be home or how her mother was. Something of that sort. It seems rather impertinent of these chaps."

" It seems to me rather nice," Grimshaw said, " if you look at it without prejudice. We may as well suppose that both Saunders and the postman are decent fellows, and Pauline is so noticeable and so nice that it's only natural that an old servant and an old postman should be concerned if she's upset. After all, you know, we do live in a village, and if we don't do any harm I don't see why we should take it for granted that these people crab us. You've got to be talked about, old man, simply because you're there. Every one is talked about. All of us."

Dudley Leicester said with a sudden and hot gloom :

" There's nothing about me to talk about. I've never wanted to be an interesting chap and I never have been. I shall give Saunders the sack and report the postman."

" Oh ! come now," Grimshaw said, " I know it's in human nature to dislike the idea of being talked about. It used to give me the creeps to think that all round me in the thousands and thousands of people that one knows, every one of them probably says something of me. But after all it all averages out. Some say good, no doubt, and some dislike me and say it. I don't suppose I can go out of my door without the baker at the corner knowing it. I am spied upon by all the policemen in the streets round about—no doubt half the shop assistants in Bond Street snigger at the fact that I help two or three women to choose their dresses and their bracelets, and sometimes pay their bills, but what does it all amount to ? "

"Hell!" Dudley Leicester said, "sheer hell!"

"Oh, well, eat your breakfast," Grimshaw replied, "you can't change it. You'll get used to it in time. Or if you don't get used to it in time I'll tell you what to do. I'll tell you what I do. People have got to talk about you. If they don't know things they'll invent lies. Tell 'em the truth. The truth is never very bad. There's my man Jervis. I've said to him: 'You can open all my letters; you can examine my pass-book at the bank; you can pay my bills; you're at liberty to read my diary of engagements. You can make what use you like of the information. If I tried to stop you doing these things I know I should never succeed, because you chaps are always on the watch, and we're bound to nod at times. Only I should advise you, Jervis,' I said, 'to stick to truth in what you say about me. It don't matter a tinker's curse to me what you do say, but you'll get a greater reputation for reliability if what you say always proves true.' So there I am. Of course it's an advantage to have no vices in particular, and to have committed no crimes. But I don't think it would make much difference to me, and it adds immensely to the agreeableness of life not to want to conceal things. You can't conceal things. It's a perpetual strain. Do what you want, and take what you get for doing it. It's the only way to live. If you tell the truth people may invent a bit but they won't invent so much. When you were married I told Hartley Jenx that if you hadn't married Pauline I should have. Everybody's pretty well acquainted with that fact. If I'd tried to conceal it people would have been talking about my coming here three times a week. As it is, it is open as the day. Nobody talks. I know they don't. Jervis would have told me. He'd be sure to know."

"What's all that got to do with it?" Dudley Leicester said with a suspicious exasperation.

Robert Grimshaw picked up on to his arm Peter the dachshund that all the while had remained immobile, save for an occasional blinking of the eyelids, between his feet. Holding the dog over his arm he said:

"Now I am going to confide Peter to Saunders. That was the arrangement I made with Pauline, so that he shouldn't worry you. But you can take this as a general principle: Let your servants know all that there is to know about you, but if you find they try to take advantage of you—if they try to blackmail you—hit them fair and square between the jaws. Yes, I mean it literally and physically. You've got mettle enough behind your fists."

A CALL

Robert Grimshaw desired to speak to Saunders in private because of one of those small financial transactions which the decencies require should not be visible between guest and master and man. He wanted, too, to give directions as to the feeding of Peter during his absence, but no sooner had the door closed upon him than Dudley Leicester made after him to open it. For he was seized by a sudden and painful aversion from the thought that Saunders should be in private communication with Robert Grimshaw. He strongly suspected that Saunders knew where he had spent those hours of the night—Saunders, with his mysterious air of respectful reserve—and it drove him nearly crazy to think that Saunders should communicate this fact to Robert Grimshaw. It wasn't that he feared Grimshaw's telling tales to Pauline. It was that he dreaded the reproach that he imagined would come into Robert Grimshaw's dark eyes : for he knew how devoted Grimshaw was to his wife. He had his hand upon the handle of the door : he withdrew it at the thought that interference would appear ridiculous. He paused and stood, his face distorted by fear, and his body bent as if with agony. Suddenly he threw the door open, and striding out came into collision with Ellida Langham. Later the feeling of relief that he had not uttered what was just on the tip of his tongue — the words : " Has Pauline sent you ? How did she hear it ? "—the feeling of relief that he had not uttered these words, let him know how overwhelming his panic had been. Ellida, however, was bursting into voluble speech.

" Katya's coming back," she said. " Katya's coming back. She's on one of the slow ships from Philadelphia with an American. She may be here any day. And I did so want to let Toto know, before he started for Athens."

She was still in black furs with a black veil, but her cheeks were more flushed than usual and her eyes danced.

" Think of Katya's coming back," she said, but her lower lip suddenly quivered.

" Toto hasn't *started ?* " she asked. " His train doesn't go till one."

She regarded Dudley Leicester with something of impatience. She said afterwards that she had never before noticed he was goggle-eyed. He stood, enormously tall, his legs very wide apart, gazing at her with his mouth open.

" I'm not a ghost, man," she said at last. " What's wrong with you ? "

Dudley Leicester raised his hand to his straw-coloured moustache.

"Grimshaw's talking to Saunders," he said.

Ellida looked at him incredulously. But eventually her face cleared.

"Oh! About Peter?" she said. "I was beginning to think you'd got an inquest in the house. . . ."

And suddenly she touched Dudley Leicester vigorously on the arm.

"Come! Get him up from wherever he is," she said with a good-humoured vivacity. "Katya's more important than Peter, and I've got the largest number of things to tell him in the shortest possible time."

Dudley Leicester in his dull bewilderment was veering round upon his straddled legs, gazing first helplessly at the bell beside the chimney-piece and then at the door. Even if he hadn't been already bewildered he would not have known very well how properly to summon a friend who was talking to a servant of his own. Did you ring, or did you go to the top of the stairs and call? But his bewilderment was cut short by the appearance of Grimshaw himself, and at the sight of his serene face just lighting up with a little smile of astonishment and pleasure, Dudley Leicester's panic vanished as suddenly and irrationally as it had fallen on him. He even smiled while Ellida Langham said with a sharp, quick little sound:

"Boo," in answer to Robert's exclamation of "Ellida!"

But Grimshaw took himself up quickly and said:

"Ah! I know you've some final message for me and you went round to my rooms and Jervis told you I'd come on here."

She was quite a different Ellida from the plaintive lady in the Park. Her lips were parted, her eyes sparkled and she held her arms behind her back as if she were expecting a dog to jump up at her.

"Ah! you think you know everything, Mr. Toto," she said, "but *je vous le donne en mille*. You don't know what I've come to tell you."

"I know it's one of two things," Grimshaw said smiling. "Either Kitty's spoken or else Katya has."

"Oh, she's more than spoken," Ellida cried out. "She's coming. In three days she'll be here."

Robert Grimshaw reflected for a long time.

"You did what you said you would?" he asked at last.

"I did what I said I would," she repeated. "I appealed to her sense of duty. I said that if she was so good in the treatment of obscure nervous diseases—and you know the head doctor-man over there said she was as good a man as himself—it was

manifestly her duty, her duty to mother's memory, to take charge of mother's only descendant—that's Kitty, and this is her answer: she's coming. She's coming with a patient from Philadelphia. . . . Oh! she's coming. Katya's coming again. Won't it make everything different?"

She pulled Robert Grimshaw by the button-hole over to the window and began to speak in little sibilant whispers.

And it came into Dudley Leicester's head to think that if Katya Lascarides was so splendid in the treatment of difficult cases, she might possibly be able to advise him as to some of the obscure maladies from which he was certain that he suffered.

Robert Grimshaw was departing that day for the city of Athens, where for two months he was to attend to the business of the firm of Peter Lascarides and Co., of which he was a director.

III

With her eyes on the grey pinnacles of the Scillies, Katya Lascarides rose from her deck-chair saying to Mrs. Van Husum:

"I am going to send a marconigram."

Mrs. Van Husum gave a dismal but a healthy groan. It pleased Katya, since it took the place of the passionately pleading: "Oh! don't leave me, don't leave me," to which Katya Lascarides had been accustomed for many months. It meant that her patient had arrived at a state of mind so normal that she was perfectly fit to be left to the unaided care of her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Clement P. Van Husum, junior, who resided at Wantage. Indeed, Mrs. Van Husum's groan was far more the sound of an elderly lady recovering from the troubles of sea-sickness than that which would be made by a neurotic sufferer from the dread of solitude.

Katya with her tranquil and decided step moved along the deck and descended the companion forward to where the Marconi installation sent out its cracklings from a little cabin surrounded by what appeared a schemeless jumble of rusty capstans and brown cables. With the same air of pensive introspection and tranquil resolution she leaned upon the little slab that was devoted to the sender of telegrams and wrote to her sister Ellida, using the telegraphic address of her husband's office:

"Shall reach London noon to-morrow. Beg you not to meet ship or to come to hotel for three days. Writing conditions."

And having handed in this message through the little shutter to the invisible operator, she threaded her way with the same

pensiveness between the capstans and the ropes up the companion and on to the upper deck where, having adjusted the rugs around the dozing figure of Mrs. Van Husum in her deck-chair she paused, with her grey eyes looking out across the grey sea, to consider the purplish islands fringed with white, the swirls of foam in the greeny and slate-coloured waters, the white light-house, and a spray-beaten tramp-steamer that, rolling, undulating and battling through the long swell between them and the Scillies was making good its departure for Mexico.

Tall, rounded, in excellent condition, with slow but decided actions, with that naturally pale complexion and clean-cut run of the cheek-bone from chin to ear which came to her with her Greek parentage, Katya Lascarides was reflecting upon the terms of her letter to her sister.

From the tranquillity of her motions and the determination of her few words, she was to be set down as a person passionless, practical, and without tides of emotion. But her eyes as she leant, gazing out to landwards, changed colour by imperceptible shades, ranging from grey to the slaty blue colour of the sea itself, and her brows, from minute to minute, following the course of her thoughts, curved slightly upwards above eyes that expressed tender reminiscences and gradually straightened themselves out until like a delicate bar below her forehead they expressed, stretched and tensile, the fact that she had arrived at an inflexible determination.

In the small and dusky reading-room that never contained any readers, she set herself slowly to write.

"My dear Ellida," her letter ran,—"I have again carefully read through your report of what Dr. Tressider says of Kitty's case, and I see no reason why the dear child should not find it in her to speak within a few weeks—within a month even. Dr. Tressider is certain that there is no functional trouble of the brain or the vocal organs. Then there is just one word for it—obstinacy. The case is not so very uncommon: the position must be regarded psychologically rather than by a pathologist. On the facts given me I should say that your little Kitty is indulging in a sort of dramatic display. You say that she is of an affectionate—even of a jealously affectionate—disposition. Very well, then: I take it that she desires to be 'fussed over.' Children are very inscrutable: who can tell, then, whether she has not found out (I do not mean to say that she is aware of a motive, as you or I might be)—found out that the way to be fussed over is just not to speak? For you, I should say, it would be almost impossible to cure her, simply because you are the per-

son most worried by her silence. And similarly with the nurses who say to her : ' Do say so-and-so, there's a little pet.' The desire to be made a fuss of : to occupy the *whole* mind of some person, or of many persons : to cause one's power to be felt—are these not motives very human ? Is there any necessity to go to the length of putting them down to mental aberration ? . . ."

Katya Lascarides had finished her sheet of paper. She blotted it with deliberate motions and, leaving it face downward, she placed her arms upon the table and, her eyelashes drooping over her distant eyes, she looked, reflectively, at her long and pointed hands. At last she took up her pen and wrote, upon a fresh sheet, in her large, firm hand :

" I am diagnosing my own case ! "

Serious and unsmiling she looked at the words : then, as if she were scrawling idly she wrote :

" Robert."

Beneath that :

" Robert Hurstlett Grimshaw ! "

And then :

" *σας 'αγαπω !* "

She heaved a sigh of voluptuous pleasure and began to write :

" I love you : I love you : I love you . . ." letting the words be accompanied by deep breaths of solace, as a very thirsty child may drink. And, having written the page full all but a tiny corner at the bottom, she inscribed, very swiftly and in minute letters :

" Oh, Robert Grimshaw : why don't you bring me to my knees ? "

She heaved one great sigh of desire and leaning back in her chair she looked at her words, smiling, and her lips moving. Then, as it were, she straightened herself out : she took up the paper to tear it into minute and regular fragments and, rising, precise and tranquil, she walked out of the doorway to the rail of the ship. She opened her hand and a little flock of white squares whirled, with the swiftness of swallows, into the discoloured wake. One piece that stuck for a moment to her forefinger showed the words :

" My own case ! "

She turned, appearing engrossed and full of reserve, again to her writing :

" No," she commenced, " do not put down this form of obstinacy to mental aberration. It is rather to be considered as a manifestation of passion. You say that Kitty is not of a passionate disposition. I imagine it may prove that she is actually of a disposition passionate in the extreme. *But all her*

passion is centred in that one desire—the desire to excite concern. The cure for this is not medical—it is merely practical. Nerve treatment will not cure it, or solicitude—but feigned indifference. You will not touch the spot with dieting—perhaps, by . . . But there, I will not explain my methods to you, old Ellida. I discussed Kitty's case as you set it forth very fully with the Chief in Philadelphia and, between us, we arrived at certain conclusions. I won't tell you what they were—not because I want to observe a professional reticence, but simply so that, in case one treatment fails, you may not be in agonies of disappointment and fear. I haven't, myself, much fear of non-success if things are as you and Dr. Tressider say. After all, weren't we both of us as kiddies celebrated for fits of irrational obstinacy? Don't you remember how one day you refused to eat if Calton the cat was in the dining-room? And didn't you keep that up for days and days and days? Yet you were awfully fond of Calton. . . . Yes: I think I can change Kitty for you: but upon one condition—that you never plead for Robert Grimshaw—that you never mention his name to me. Quite apart from any other motive of mine—and you know that I consider mother's example before anything else in the world—if he will not make this sacrifice for me, he does not love me. I do not mean to say that you are to forbid him your house, for I understand he dines with you every other day. His pleadings I am prepared to deal with—but not yours, for in you they savour of disrespect for mother. Indeed, disrespect or no disrespect, I will not have it. If you agree to this, come to our hotel as soon as you have read it. If you disagree: if you won't, dear, make me a solemn promise, leave me three days in which to make a choice out of the five patients who wish to have me in London and then come and see me, bringing Kitty.

"Not a word! you understand, not one single word!

"On that dreadful day when Robert told us that father had died intestate and that other . . . I was going to add 'horror,' but, since it was mother's doing, she did it, and so it must have been right . . . when he told us that we were penniless and illegitimate, I saw in a flash my duty to mother's memory. I have stuck to it and I will stick to it. Robert must give in or I will never play the part of wife to him."

She folded her letter into the stamped envelope and having dropped it deliberately into the ship's letter-box she rejoined Mrs. Van Husum, who was reading "The Mill on the Floss" on the main deck.

(*To be continued*)

THE MONTH

EDITORIAL: *THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE—"Militants Here in Earth"; Music; The Wholesome Play, by* C. E. MONTAGUE; *Some Victorian Chancellors, by* W. M. J. WILLIAMS; *The Persian Crisis; Rebirth or Death? by* PROFESSOR EDWARD G. BROWNE; *Review: The Condition of England, by C. F. G. MASTERMAN.*

THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE

"Militants Here in Earth"

"ELECTION yesterday"—a friend writes from the Cleveland division.—"Great fun as usual. I can't see that the Budget interests any one, but we are crazy about votes for women. A man got his ribs kicked in for asking an indecent question of a Suffragette. This in the mining district! It's all Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Gawthorpe; the others don't count for much." And inasmuch as this friend of ours till the day before yesterday was one of the most cool scoffers against the claims of women to have a share in the management of their own affairs, this passage from his letter may serve the Government as its *Mene*, *Mene*, *Tekel*, *Upharsin*. Indeed, to all intents and purposes women have got the vote: it is merely a question of whose shall be the hand that gives it them. And the credit for this lies entirely with the militant Suffragettes. For it is useless to say that the gentle and estimable ladies who for years have sat in drawing-rooms and uttered in low voices the statement that women ought to have the franchise—that these gentle and estimable ladies have done anything whatever even in the way of preparing popular opinion. Before the coming into power of the present Government it was an unthinkable thing that a woman should go to the Polls: the present Government has rendered it inevitable.

IT has rendered it inevitable by the sheer stupidity of weight, by discourtesy, by indifference. The militant tactics have caused every man and woman in the United Kingdom, at least to think: the militant tactics would have been impossible—they would, indeed, have been inexcusable had the Prime Minister exhibited an inclination sufficiently courteous merely to receive a deputation. But, not having given himself the trouble to think about the matter at all, being out of touch with the people and unable to read in small things the trend of the National psychology, the Prime Minister presented the women

with just that dreary opposition that was needed to help their propaganda. For indeed, had he taken thought for a moment, the Prime Minister might have seen that any one who says that women should be denied the vote on account of their unfitness condemns at once the whole of our history, the whole of our civilisation. For if women are unfit it is our history that has made them so, and it is surely the most dire condemnation of our civilisation to say that more than one-half of the children we bring into the world will be so badly trained that they are unfitted to exercise a right which is granted to innumerable dipsomaniacs, to innumerable semi-imbeciles, to innumerable men who can neither read nor write.

Historically considered, it was probably Paul, the most *bourgeois* of all the followers of Christ, the Paul who began the turning of Christianity from its first simple basis—it was probably Paul who first started in the Christian Cosmogony, with the words *Taceat mulier in Ecclesiâ*, that tendency that on the one hand causes the Germanic nations to deify, on the other to cajole, swindle, and sweat the "fair sex." The adoration Schopenhauer called *Christo-Germanisch Dummheit:* the other tendency he exhibited himself in a marked degree, but he has omitted to provide us with a name for it. This singular tendency reached its high-water mark in the days when a woman sat on the throne. The Elizabethan dramatists, the Elizabethan sonneteers gave us those figures of women who, as it were seven foot high, bounded along through the air two feet from the ground. Shakespeare gave us Portia, Shakespeare gave us Juliet, Shakespeare gave us Cordelia—but we should have liked to have seen what was Shakespeare's idea of a fitting marriage-deed for his son Hamnett. If you will read the advices of these amiable and charming poets and courtiers—their respective advices to their sons in the matters of marriage—and several volumes of such advice could be gathered together—you will see how in the study the applauder of Cordelia became an odious cross between a horse-dealer viewing the mounts that are paraded before him and a master of every kind of legal chicanery for the entrapping of already helpless creatures. Little by little this tendency has weakened, but still, as for instance in the novels of Mr. George Meredith, Woman is represented as the creature seven foot high radiating light, gliding along the ground. And still the tendency of Mr. Meredith's readers, whilst they appland and adore Diana of the Crossways or Rose Harrington, would be

to exclaim, according to their rank and station, some sort of translation of the vulgar phrase: "Why don't you go home and mind the baby?"

THAT at least would have been the tendency until the day before yesterday, but Sir Albert de Rutzen's granting Mrs. Pankhurst leave to appeal has, by a sort of miracle, changed all this, even in the mind of the middle-class man. Why exactly, because Sir Albert, inspired, no doubt, as other police magistrates have been, by direct instructions from the Government, is in a state of perplexity as to whether or not any body of citizens under the number of ten should have the right to approach and petition the Throne—why because of this the English middle-class man should suddenly think it desirable that women should have the vote would be incomprehensible were not the English mind, with its want of logicality, so familiar to us all.

HERE are the memorable words of Blackstone ("Commentaries," vol. i. (ed. 13), page 143):

"If there should happen any uncommon injury or infringement of the rights before mentioned, which the ordinary course of law is too defective to reach, there still remains a fourth subordinate right, appertaining to every individual, namely, the right of petitioning the King, or either House of Parliament, for the redress of grievances. In Russia, we are told that the Czar Peter established a law that no subject might petition the Throne till he had first petitioned two different Ministers of State. In case he obtained justice from neither, he might then present a third petition to the prince; upon pain of death, if found to be in the wrong. The consequence of which was, that no one dared to offer such third petition; and grievances seldom falling under the notice of the Sovereign, he had little opportunity to redress them. The restrictions, for some there are, which are laid upon petitioning in England, are of a nature extremely different; and while they promote the spirit of peace, they are no check on that liberty. Care only must be taken lest, under the pretence of petitioning, the subject be guilty of any riot or tumult; as it happened in the opening of the memorable Parliament of 1640, and to prevent this, it is provided by the Statute 13, Car. II. c. 5, that no petition to the King, or either House of Parliament, for any alteration in Church or State, shall be signed by above twenty persons, unless the matter thereof be approved by three

justices of the peace, or the major part of the grand jury in the country, and in London by the lord mayor, aldermen, and common council : nor shall any petition be presented by more than ten persons at a time. But, under these regulations, it is declared by the Statute 1 W. and M. st. 2, c. 2 (5§) that the subject hath a right to petition ; and that all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal."

—and taking advantage of a sudden inspiration, Mrs. Pankhurst, on June 28, brought her battalion of women, not in a single body but in rapidly succeeding bodies of nine each, down to the House. And so the Government trembles and is perplexed : Mr. Gladstone receives a deputation of another group of Suffragettes, as if in a shuffling manner to show that the way to get the vote is not Mrs. Pankhurst's way—and the middle-class man is converted.

The reason for this conversion becomes plain after a little reflection. It lies in Mrs. Pankhurst as an object-lesson. For in a very public place Mrs. Pankhurst has proved herself a woman of consummate ability and of a consummate organising power. "If," the middle-class man has said in his heart, "a woman can so thwart a Government, then, indeed, all women have the right to meddle in politics." It was nothing to him that there had existed Joan of Arc, Joan de Montfort, Elizabeth the Virgin Queen, innumerable abbesses administering the complex affairs of innumerable convents, innumerable matrons of hospitals, carrying out tasks as difficult and as complicated. No, the middle-class man wanted to see it on the bioscope. And he has got his wish !

The great weight of the Suffragette Movement has been that it had its basis in the hearts of the poorer people. As any one who has canvassed in by-elections will tell you, it was in the poorer quarters of constituencies that the canvasser met with little kindnesses and an attentive hearing. During meetings held weekly in one of the poorest quarters of London, the speakers have, night by night, succeeded in disposing of an average of six shillings worth of Suffrage pamphlets : a day's attempt to sell *Votes for Women* outside High Street, Kensington, Station resulted in the sale of two copies, for one of which, it is true, sixpence was paid. These facts are very symptomatic, for women of the shopping class, having got all they desire in the power to shop, are either gently indifferent or openly dislike any attempt

on the part of their less fortunate sisters to better their conditions. But that the working and professional classes of women eagerly desire the vote and earnestly believe that it will cause an amelioration of their condition the following figures may show :

Of the women doctors, numbering 553 in all, fifteen are against the granting of the vote and 538 for. Of the High School mistresses of the country 200 are members of the Women's Social and Political Union, and the following is an extract from Miss Clementina Black's analysis of the names of 25,000 signatories to the petition which she presented in 1907 :

Agricultural	41
Artistic	574
Civil Service	730
Clerks	486
Domestic	2,769
Dramatic	58
Educational	5,692
Factory	252
Literary	410
Married	1,741
Medical	445
Musical	380
Nursing	498
Scientific	93
Secretarial	659
Social and Philanthropic, Poor Law Guardians	2,044
Trade	3,068
Unclassified	5,060
	25,000

so that it will be seen that the immense majority of signatories—even if we give the 5060 unclassified, and the 1741 " married " women to the ranks of the leisured classes—the immense majority of the signatories were women employed in professions or trades.

A WORD as to the actual violences of the militant Suffragettes. In all revolutions or attempts at revolution a certain amount of physical force has proved necessary. And in the present revolution what is surprising is not that some physical violence should have been used, but that there should have been so very little. And what little there was, was purely of an official, of a formal character. For it is obvious that when, on June 28, the leader of the Suffragettes struck Inspector Jarvis, the blow was merely symbolical. Mrs. Pankhurst's purpose was to be arrested so as to test a point of law and, since you cannot be arrested without committing an offence, some sort of offence had to be committed.

So with all the other "breaches" of decorum and good taste. Had these been committed for any personal reasons, had the ladies wandering down Regent Street with sandwich-boards been intent on advertising their own hat-shops, or had the ladies who threw stones at Cabinet Ministers' windows owned personal grudges against, or been betrayed by, the occupants of the houses, they might have been accused of breaches of good taste. But it is the merest bad faith to accuse these self-sacrificing ladies of personal ill-manners when all their actions were so purely non-personal. It would be as logical to accuse one of his Majesty's judges of murder when he pronounces the death-sentence. And it should be remembered that whereas all other revolutions have been accomplished at the cost of sufferings to others, the Suffragettes, in this instance, have been the only persons very heroically to suffer. The position of the Government is very plain. Either it will bring in a bill to confer the Suffrage on women on an extended basis, or it will leave its political opponents the opportunity to confer on a limited, propertied, and normally conservative class a measure of franchise. The Government has put itself into a very difficult position. Either it will surrender —and it can only surrender in shame and confusion : it can only surrender expecting very little gratitude from its conquerors— or it will confer upon the country a half-century of Conservative legislation.

E. R.

MUSIC

Covent Garden: *Louise*, by Gustave Charpentier.

CHARPENTIER'S *Louise* is assuredly destined for a not unworthy popularity, for a time at least. There is in the music much that will enable it to hold its own among the operas of to-morrow. Meanwhile, for the moment, its popularity is made doubly sure by the libretto; but we cannot help wondering somewhat fearfully what to-morrow will think of the entanglement of realism and symbolism in its story. Even now there is a suggestion of ideas from which we are gradually emerging. But its appeal is still very strong. The story is improper; and every one knows that impropriety, however lamentable it may be, is decidedly popular. We have only to go to that fine British institution, the Gaiety Theatre, to realise that. But we hasten to say that the impropriety of *Louise* is of a very superior kind. In the first place, the scene is laid in Paris. Of course every school-boy "knows all about Paris." What he does not know

and will only discover later, on closer acquaintance, is that Paris is *doux comme un mouton américain*. That interesting Lady whom the Bible tells us is attired in Scarlet has decamped to Vienna, Buda-Pesth, Petersburg—we cannot pretend to know exactly where, but Paris she has certainly left in the grip of the dollar and the planked steak.

In *Louise*, however, we see Paris in the most splendid and romantic light. Louise and Julien (La Mère calls Julien a *pilier de cabaret*) apostrophise it together after they have decided to leap the fence of convention. "Paris!! Paris!!!" they say on their very best top notes; finally they throw themselves on their knees before it. As they sing the lights of the city appear in the most responsive manner, one by one, like the gleaming eyes of a gigantic Argus. Very large stars shine in the sky. Romance is in the air. Louise is no longer merely *une petite Montmartroise;* Julien is exalted, lifted from the atmosphere of the cabaret which often clings to him. They are transfigured for us, not by Paris and mock Parisian transports, but by the music which shows us beautifully and perfectly the human emotion they feel for one another. The music casts a glamour over us; we forget what Julien and Louise would really have done in the circumstances; they become for us two symbols, and their emotion is symbolic. From time to time the ugly noises of the city mingle with the beautiful love music; and when the crowd begins to arrive symbolism falls with a crash. The scene of the crowning of Louise by the dancer and the Pape des Fous would ensure the popularity of any opera. Without warning we are hurled into *opera buffa*. As it was given at Covent Garden this scene was hideous and ridiculous, with all the false noise, false colour, false movement which we associate with the modern musical comedy.

The music of this scene was ugly; the chorus was deafening; the dancing was elephantine. M. Warnery's singing as the Pape des Fous was the only touch of distinction. The idea of introducing dancing into the scene was good. Of all forms of art dancing is the most neglected and misunderstood; and yet it is one of the most wonderful, and certainly the most curious, of them all. It appeals at once to the sense of rhythm which, from the ugly conditions of modern life, is an almost atrophied sense in the majority of people. It strongly suggests phantasy; and in this scene its effect should have been most valuable. But for some strange reason the dancer at Covent Garden seemed leaden-

footed; like many public dancers her sense of rhythm was defective. We got not the slightest impression of phantasy. The sudden appearance of Louise's mother in the midst of all this garishness was not only extremely dramatic, it was an absolute relief. The crowd fled before her.

In the last act the climax of the story is reached swiftly and effectively. Louise, persuaded by her mother to return home on account of her father's illness, finds herself trapped.

The whole act is full of tragedy. The parents with well-meaning deceit have induced her to come back, secretly intending not to let her return to her lover. The mother says this plainly. She is determined that it shall be a case of marriage or nothing. "L'amour libre" sings Louise in her face. It is the supreme struggle of the child to free itself from parental control, of the parents to keep the child in the old safe way. In the case of Louise the position is not complicated by diplomacy or delicacy of feeling. They are simple folk. When the father realises the hopelessness of the struggle he does what might be expected from such a man. He drives Louise from the house, hurling a chair at her as she goes. The next moment he realises that she is gone, that he has let her go, driven her, indeed, back again to the city. "Paris!" he cries in agony and execration as the curtain falls.

This last act is very fine. It rises with the music above the rather tiresome realism which obtrudes in some of the other acts. It is sheer tragedy, all the more desolating because of the subtlety with which it is managed. Le Père does not seize a carving-knife and plunge it into Louise's heart. The mother does not leap from the window to hurl herself, a mangled mass, at her daughter's feet as she runs out at the front door. Louise is allowed to hasten back to the primrose path of Free Love without immediate disaster. Only we know that when a young woman proclaims herself a *fille de Paris* (or of any other big city) she is under considerable delusions as to the real nature of her new parent. The tragedy is suggested, not insisted on. In a word, the libretto as well as the music is written by a Frenchman.

The music dignifies extraordinarily this squalid story. It has great individuality, breadth, and, for the most part, a pleasing

sobriety. It is the French expression of the musical idiom we expect in the modern German school. Now and then, with hideous results, it is entangled by the realism of the story; but on the whole, by broadening and exalting it, the music successfully transmutes this realism.

For several reasons the cast was interesting. As La Mère, Mlle. Bérat brought into evidence the defect of the opera. Sometimes she was just *la femme de l'ouvrier*, rough, narrow, good-hearted; at other times she was a much more impressive figure, too much so, in fact, for the consistency of the part. She is certainly one of the finest singers of this season.

M. Gilibert was excellent as Louise's father; we should like to see him more often in such a good part. Unfortunately, the lady who took the part of Louise was chiefly remarkable for the excellence of her intentions. In the last act her earnestness enabled her to rise to a certain level of intensity. Obviously she worked too hard. Vocally she was overshadowed by M. Dalmorès, who, as usual, sang with great breadth and power. It was these very qualities which the soprano seemed to lack. Her higher notes were clear and fresh, but on the middle register the voice did not seem really placed.

Of the operas the Syndicate has given us this year, *Louise* is certainly one of the most interesting.

H. B.

The Wholesome Play

By C. E. Montague

In England nothing is so often said of plays as that they are wholesome—or, of course, unwholesome. You know the phrases —" a pure and wholesome drama " ; " wholesome, old-fashioned farce " ; " a wholesome entertainment for old and young " ; and, in the music-hall advertisements, " two hours of refined and wholesome varieties." These are the innocent sheep. And then the goats—the " morbid and unwholesome problem play " ; " the dark unwholesomeness " of Sudermann ; the " brilliant but unwholesome " plays of Mr. Shaw. Or you hear how Mr. Pinero was relatively wholesome till he wrote *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, but never quite the same man since ; or Mr. Maugham was most unwholesome in his youth, the wild days when he wrote *A Man of Honour*, but is quite disinfected now, like Mr. Sutro, who, also, lay in quarantine once for having truck with the unwholesome Maeterlinck. In France or Germany the first things asked, it would seem, about a new play are : " Is it amusing ? " " Is it interesting ? " " Does it prove anything ? " Among us what people ask is, rather, " Can it be seen without giving me any disease ? "—as if plays were a species of drains that exist to convey, or refrain from conveying, diphtheria and typhoid. Where that is how playgoers look at a play, the meek kind of critic who tries to be all that his readers would have him becomes in due course a semi-official Inspector of Nuisances or a consulting sanitary engineer. He takes to the very language of these callings. You remember the things that were said by these experts when first Ibsen's plays were acted in England. The plays were called—no, certified ; it was so positive—" bestial," " revolting," " abominable," " disgusting," " foul," " fetid," " putrid," " malodorous," " loathsome," " garbage," " offal," " carrion," " sewage," " an open drain," " unhealthy," " unwholesome." You see how strictly the vocabulary used is that of Medical Officers of Health.

Now I for my part have never been able—indeed, have not tried—to think of my playgoing as a branch of hygiene. Friends,

to judge by their talk, seem often to go to the play as they might go to brine baths at Droitwich, or mud baths at Leuk ; I went, from the first, for the fun of the thing, and to this day I never, when coming away from a theatre, find myself feeling my pulse or taking my temperature. Mind, I do not defend these omissions. They may come from want of due seriousness. As some amends I have tried at least, in all humility, to see exactly what these sanitarians mean by " wholesome." I will tell you how far my researches have gone.

The first thing to do was to seek good advice. There is a kind of men before whom I feel, as perhaps you do too, that all our poor knowledge is dross, compared with fine rubies like theirs : I mean men who will say at every third sentence they utter, " That's what Johnny Hare always tells me," or " Poor Toole used always to say to me—so-and-so." At the first sound of those formulas you feel that this man clearly lives at the centre of things : and if you are prudent you pump him as long as he waits. Securing one of these pundits, I piped all hands to the pumps and soon I learnt—well, not what wholesomeness is in its essence, but where you can find it in sample and sometimes in bulk. " Why," he said, " there's all these things that Lewis Waller and Fred Terry do—*Monsieur Beaucaire* and *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and *Dorothy o' th' Hall* and *Sunday ;* and of course all the things like *The Idler* and *Mice and Men* and *The Only Way* and, before that, *Bootles' Baby* was charming ; and, of still older things, there's always *Still Waters Run Deep*, and there's all that Gilbert has written ; again there's this new piece, *A White Man*, and, if it comes to that, I'd like to know what's wrong," he asked, with an air that was almost a threat, " with *The Belle of New York*, if you aren't a prig to begin with."

The list made one ponder. Could wholesomeness mean moral, ethical wholesomeness ? Did he, that is, mean to say that these plays and their kind were ennobling in this sense—that in them the doing of hard, right things, which we might have to do in our turns, instead of easy wrong things, was clothed with so much charm that doing those right things next day would perhaps come more easily ? Consider the scene, we'll say, in *Mice and Men* where the soldier comes home to find out that desire for a former mistress fails him ; in fact he desires a woman who's younger ; so he turns mighty virtuous all of a sudden and sends back his old love's letter of welcome unopened, taking so little thought for her that it is intercepted by her husband. And yet this sanctimonious cur is not so much as flicked by the dramatist with one little whip-lash of irony. If anything, we

are tipped the wink that what he did was quite the manly, knightly line for all gallant young soldiers in similar fixes. Not much ethical wholesomeness there. Or look at *A White Man*. There you're invited to take it as quite right and noble that an upright man should take on himself the sins of a wholesale thief, leaving the thief at large, among the world's spoons, in order that the thief's wife, whom the upright man worships, may not cease to live with her blackguard husband, and bear him, it may be, little blackguard sons. Imagine the state a man's mind must be in, or pretend to be in, to write morals like those. Still, that is but a trifle. For I went, in quest of the true wholesome brand, to *The Belle of New York*. From a sympathetic presentation of a young hero drunk and lying on his stomach on the saddle of a bicycle and pedalling in the air with his legs, the whole thing seemed to pass into an ecstatic fantasia on sex questions as these might be understood in fowl-runs or by cats in our back-yards. The power of the play, as an emetic, was so great that I can only speak as an eye-witness of its first half. Don't think I suggest that all my friend's wholesome plays were daubed with quite that slime. But most of them held up to sympathy or admiration—that's the point—some mode of feeling that was poor and mean, if only *Monsieur Beaucaire*, with its "sympathetic" heroine, whose love goes up and down like a thermometer in most direct ratio to the probable length, at that moment, of her lover's pedigree, or Sir William Gilbert's clever librettos with their rasping false notes of wit at the expense of women who grow old and lose good looks and are not married. No perfect moral wholesomeness there, either.

Well, if not moral, was it intellectual? Did those plays, as people say, "widen our mental horizons?" Did they "make history live," or give us the very feel of a life lived to-day in some other part of the world? In the first that comes to mind, the wholesome *Dorothy o' th' Hall*, the head of one of the first families in Tudor England sends a professional buffoon to the head of another to ask his daughter's hand for a son. This other head of a great house arranges to have his own daughter flogged in public on the castle terrace by the local butcher. For myself I know no history; but surely you need only look at a few Tudor family portraits, at most read a few Tudor letters or journals, to know that historical drama like that is mere bunkum begotten of similar bunkum that flourished before it, Nor need you have been out in Western America—you need only glance through a little Bret Harte—to be sure that a play such as *Sunday* has brought you no personal notes upon life out there,

but merely a weak new decoction from old books, the slops you may make by boiling used tea-leaves again, the kind of bogus information Dr. Johnson had in mind when he distinguished from it a certain friend's excellent knowledge of life, "seen freshly, not distilled through books." So in another of these "wholesome" plays, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, you get the results of no fiery first-hand, imaginative vision of the French Revolution, but merely the shadow of a shadow of a shadow, just a modern reader's impression of Dickens' impression of Carlyle's impression of France under the Terror. And if there is one thing certain about the hygiene of the mind, it is that you must keep its pipes from being choked with this mere fungoid literary stuff that grows on other literary stuff, the plays and novels and poems vamped up out of reminiscences of other poems and novels and plays.

You see we are driven from pillar to post. No moral wholesomeness, it seems, to speak of. No mental wholesomeness at all. What other wholesomenesses are there? Well, there is certainly one. Before saying what, just look at two phrases you constantly hear from nearly every leal stickler for a "wholesome" drama. One is the phrase "a hard day's work in the city." "The kind of play I want," they will say, "after a hard day's work in the city is—so-and-so." And the other, akin to the first, is "the labours of the day." "When I go to a theatre," they say, "after the labours of the day, I really don't want—such and such a kind of play." In their scheme of life playgoing seems allotted to the place that—you'll remember—a weak drop of whisky and water held in that of Mr. Pinero's Dick Phenyl. "If you don't," Phenyl asked in surprise, "take weak drop whisky an' wa'er after the labours of the day, when *do* you take weak drop whisky an' wa'er?" If you don't go to theatres exhausted with the labours of the day, in what state *do* you go to theatres? They start by implying the playgoer's normal condition to be one of mental prostration; plays are to rest on the working assumption that every brain which is to take them in will be just dropping with fatigue before it begins trying. And often they will specify the nature of the labours with which they themselves are jaded by eight o'clock, and from the special origin of their private headaches they will draw general conclusions as to what no play should be. A man at the Bar, in large criminal practice, will say: "I see so much of wickedness and its resultant miseries in *my* day's work that I don't want to see them any more in the evening." Or a doctor will say: "Heaven knows I come across enough tragedies of heredity at

my consulting-rooms without going into them over again at the theatre." Or a bankruptcy official will say : " After having to sift the consequences of human folly and waste and weakness during all *my* business hours I want some wholesome relief from these things at the play." All raise the same cry to be spared the artistic treatment of that special side of life of which each really does know something. They all, from their several stations in life, look to the drama as Mr. Shaw's Drinkwater looked to narrative romance, to *The Skeleton Horseman* and *Sweeny Todd, the Demon Barber* for that which should " tyke him aht of the sawdid reeyellities of the Worterloo Rowd." And sometimes they will reinforce this ideal aspiration by reference to such primal truths of our common nature as that after dinner the digestive system calls for special help from the blood, and if the brain should then be doing hard work too, it also calls for blood and then there may not be enough blood to go round.

Well, as judges of what may be best for their personal health, you or I cannot rival them. Bacon says " a man's own observation, what he finds good of and what he finds hurt of, is the best physic." My cat, when she is bilious, goes out and eats grass, and, though I may prefer Eno's Fruit Salt, I don't doubt she knows what prescription is best for her own constitution. But granted that critics like these are their own best protectors from gastritis and melancholia, what is it likely that the drama of their choice will be—this emulgent dressing for sore brains, this nightly hydro for intellects run down by the day's main occupations ? Count the conditions. Already you have it laid down : first, there must be no picture of tragic life with so much of the taint of truth or reality in it that it could afflict any weary Official Receiver or magistrate with reminiscences of what he knows about the actual connection between men's characters and the events of their lives ; secondly, the success of some fagged physician's after-dinner rest-cure must not be imperilled by what might recall, with any sting of veracity, that great source of tragedy which modern knowledge has more than restored to the place which primitive religion used to give to it —I mean the fact that in body and soul parents and children live one continuous life in which the winds sown by one generation are reaped as whirlwinds by another. But of course there's a thirdly too, and a fourthly, and so on without end. Every man's trade makes some big human interest the field where he works ; every man " after the labours of the day " has the same right to warn the dramatist off that big interest. Are men of business, " after a hard day's work in the city " to be re-immersed in finance

by such dramas as Björnson's *Bankruptcy?* Of course not. And then some poor, tired municipal Medical Officer, after *his* hard day's work in the city, shall he be exposed to further exhaustion by entering on points of professional duty and honour as he himself knows them, in Ibsen's *Enemy of the People?* Of course not, either. And even the hard-driven housewife—after her labours of the day shall she, if she goes to the play, be reminded of them by the rending sight of David Ballard's mother making both ends meet? Of course not, again. Perish all such insanitary thoughts. Each man and woman alike must be taken out of the sordid realities of his or her own special Waterloo Road. So the drama is driven off all the main roads of the life of our day; it is valued for what it excludes; and, to be called wholesome, must carefully disobey Hamlet and *not* "show . . . the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

If a dramatist fails to fall in with this fashion, his failure is noted in terms which show at once the leading rules, the major premises, on which these sanitarian estimates of dramatic values are based. Some new play, we are told, is not really dramatic, in fact it is a "study in morbid psychology." Observe the nature of the argument that is here implied. Expanded it becomes, in syllogistic form: (1) *Major premise.* No play can be a study in morbid psychology. (2) *Minor premise.* This new play is a study in morbid psychology. (3) *Conclusion.* Therefore this new play cannot be a play. Of course the very people who will affirm this major premise, and apply it in that way, will also call *Macbeth* or *Coriolanus*, or any of Shakespeare's numerous studies in morbid pyschology, not only a play but even a model play. But that only illustrates the fact that for many people the acceptance of Shakespeare's greatness is mainly an act of mechanical assent to a valuation which they find nearly every one taking for granted as part of the natural order of things, like the wisdom of Socrates and Solomon or the strength of Samson or Mr. Sandow. Or, again, a new play will be condemned as being not a work of art at all, but rather "analytical" or "pathological," or as turning the theatre into a "dissecting-room," as if normal dramatic art and the analysis or dissection of strange emotional states or moral types were two necessarily opposite and mutually exclusive things; and this objection, too, will be raised by people who at other times profess warm admiration for older plays in which the dissection of diseased souls is the main interest—*Hamlet*, for instance, or *Richard II.*—showing, again, how little of their own spontaneous personal judgment people often bring to the criticism of traditional

masterpieces. Shakespeare may do what he likes, now, but woe unto the dramatist of to-day who takes seriously all that is said in Shakespeare's praise and tries accordingly to do the kind of thing that Shakespeare did in writing the ethical "problem plays" of *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well that Ends Well*, or his anatomies of moral cranks or cripples, things like *Troilus and Cressida* or—if he did write it—*Timon of Athens;* in fact, in writing all the many plays of his which seek (for it cannot be accident) to make your mind wrestle with tough thoughts, in slippery places. For a new play that thus sets you grappling with thought, where no thought had been, is sure to be scouted as "disagreeable," "unpleasant," above all "unwholesome."

Unwholesome, in one sense, it probably is. There are states of the body, or times of the day, in which even open-air exercise may not do good. A doctor once told me we all ought to lie very flat on our backs for a time after dinner. "Just look," he went on, "at the beasts of the field. They lie down, full length, every one of them, after full meals." No doubt the mind, too, has its own need to lie very flat on its back after all the square meal of reflection it gets in a "day's hard work in the city." It may very well feel the better next morning for passing a night at the play in being preserved from the use of its faculties. Wholesome, in that sense, the play that is null and void undoubtedly may be. But let us be clear about what that sense is; do not let us confuse what is wholesome for these minds avowedly tired and dulled and dyspeptic with what is wholesome for minds in health and condition. The strictest inaction may be just the thing for a delicate cow that has been driven far and has then eaten much and that now desires to ruminate. But the whole of the playgoing fauna does not consist of much fatigued ruminants in frail health, and when one admits that a thing may be wholesome for some invalid, that is not saying what it might be for the same person well, or for others who never were ill.

Here, however, I fancy an objection. All this—some one may object—is merely saying what the "wholesome" play is not. But what *is* it? It is not, you say, a quickener of thought; it is not a thrower of genuine light upon life; it does not present to us, lifted into ideal or typical forms, our own possessing interests, our difficult points of business or professional conduct—just think of the whole universe of dramatic material of that kind in a day's life of London or Manchester—nor our hesitations between many theories, all tenable, of what is best worth doing, or getting, in life—wealth, or distinction, or quiet, or sport, or the good

of our kind, or a family's social promotion, or what not—the things that are real, that people think themselves to sleep upon, in bed at night; it does not, again, come near any searching or even relevant comment on the mutual relations of men and women. Still it cannot be vacuum merely. Even the amplest system of holes, like a net, has also some positive string to keep them together. And so apart from its exclusions and negations what is there left that the wholesome play does not taboo? What does it present?

The question is fair; and in trying to answer it fairly one casts an eye over the whole wide firmament of "wholesome" drama, seeking form or outline in the midst of space, and presently there do come twinkling into sight, now in one place, now in another, as the stars do, the only slightly dissimilar stars, at dusk, a mighty host of variants of one central type of positive character. This type, in its general lines, is that of the man who is not, as we say, a bad chap after all; the man who, again, is more wide awake than he seems; the man who may not have much gift of the gab, but is sure to come well through a scrimmage; the man who does not wear his heart on his sleeve, preferring to wear there a heart much less good than his own, so that when he turns out an unparalleled brick the cynical observer of human nature is knocked all of a heap; the man who, morally, is a regular lion of generosity, usually crouched, it is true, but quite prepared to do terrific springs of self-devotion if the occasion for them be sufficiently fantastic; mentally, too, a perfect mortar or sunk mine of gumption, with a sluggish fuse to it, slow to take light but going off at last in veritable prodigies of mother-wit and horse sense; the man who "has his faults," but still—well, if he drinks he is "nobody's enemy but his own" and at those next-morning hours when a nature radically bad would be simply ringing for soda-water, he is delighted to be shot or guillotined for the advantage of comparative strangers; he may not keep appointments, or pay his tailor, or do his work, and of course he is not a "plaster saint"; but then he "cannot bear to see a woman cry," and at any hour of the day or night he is game to adopt a baby, or soothe death-beds, or renounce, for reasons wildly insubstantial, the satisfaction of the cravings of his honest heart. You remember the heroes of *Bootles' Baby*, of *Sunday*, of *The Prince Chap*, of all the other plays in which female infants are planted upon rugged bachelors, with vast emotional consequences further on. You remember Mark Cross in *The Idler*—his phlegm, his ineffectiveness at common times, his easy ascent into saintliness; you remember *The Scarlet*

Pimpernel, and the scapegoat in *The Only Way* and the scamp in *The Breed of the Treshams*, and the lumpish man in *Still Waters Run Deep*, and the swearing, back-slapping, good-hearted miners and war correspondents—characters that have their points of unlikeness one to another, no doubt, but still have all a solid Greatest Common Measure of rough diamondism.

Of course there always were rough diamonds at the theatre. Shakespeare's Fluellen was one ; Ben Jonson's Squire Downright was another. But, till the rage for wholesomeness set in, the stage rough diamonds were but single spies. Only these last fifty years have the resources of the rough-diamond fields been really opened up ; now our playwrights are floating a moral De Beers, without any of its great original's restrictions on output. They go up and down like Aladdin's mother when she went to court, shaking rough diamonds out of her dress whenever she moved. Why is it ? Why all this over-production of one out of all the workable forms of amiable humanity ? Well, you may notice that with those who hold by the wholesomist creed, it is one of the sacredest rules of all dramatic craftsmanship to " give the public what the public wants." You find the rule laid down in various sagacious aphorisms such as the recent dictum of Mr. Hall Caine that the public is always right, a reflection drawn from him by repeated expressions of the public conviction that Mr. Hall Caine is always right, and amounting perhaps to a prose version of the well-known lyric refrain :

> So you are right, and I am right, and all is right as right can be.

And, again, you have it enshrined in trade maxims like the hackneyed one about " box-office criticism." No doubt, then, it is felt that the great public longs to feast its eyes and ears, without limit—I do not mean that its ears are without limit, but its desire—upon this one ethical type. And as our most frequented dramatists, although they may not all be great hands at writing plays, have usually a skill in marketing to which one can only take off one's hat, we may assume with confidence that when they feel this is the public's wish, it is. The question then becomes : " Why does the public wish to revel, like this, in the contemplation of this special type ? Is it, perhaps, because the type is rather like the vision that each of us, in his complacency, has of himself ? To ourselves, you know, we are all still, strong men. None of us " has any nonsense about him " in the intimate intercourse that we have with our own natures after good dinners ; then you see you were born, not perhaps, for a life of humdrum duty, but to rise to tremendous emer-

gencies ; the scales seem to fall from your eyes ; your little external deficiencies fail to hide from you longer your heart of gold ; you are thought stupid perhaps—it's only that you cover discretion with a cloak of folly. You're rough ?—so are all diamonds ; the goodwill of warm rugged hearts like your own is too pure to practise mere forms. Are you not very nice in your talk ? Oh, it's just that your genuine Lancelots always do hate to put their white souls in the very shop window. If you do sometimes tipple a little, well, after all, what is a trifle like that compared with the way you would give up your life, as at present advised, on some distant romantic occasion ? Once let the great love you bear yourself start off down that greased slope of egoistic musing, and every bad thing that you know of yourself will become, in your sight, an actual mark of the saint and the hero that you would be if saintliness and heroism were only easier than all the routine work of being a decent ordinary human being. Then go in that mood to a good, " wholesome " play ; the odds are, you will find you are seeing your own sterling self in a glass. *Still Waters Run Deep*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Sunday*, *The Breed of the Treshams*, *The Only Way*—they all show who shall inherit the earth or get clean into Heaven—simply the you of your vision, the Bayard *manqué*, the Philip Sidney waiting to come off, the paragon that a man is to himself when he goes fast asleep while a lady is playing Beethoven and dreams of the dragons he would slay for pure chivalry.

Of course this grand manly fellow, as Stevenson's Yankee called all men resembling himself, is not the whole solid content of our wholesomer plays. They abound in a kind of half-made women, obtrusively weaker vessels, " hither all dewy from a convent fetched," and often as breathless and monosyllabic with aghast innocence as if they had run all the way—" sweet clinging natures," like a well-knitted sock, and about as fit as a sock for true marriage and comradeship ; a type the elaboration of which is really so much sensual savagery, casting back as it does towards the relation of some Mogul or Khalifa to some scared, half-grown slave-girl, if not to the relation of buck elk to the timorous doe of sentimental convention. And then there are the so-called " happy endings," the happiest of which, perhaps, is the ending that Mr. Pinero, on coming to market, tacked on to his play of *The Profligate*. You remember that, as he first finished the play, a youthful career of a kind that in real life does, as a matter of scientific fact, tend to early decay and some horrible death did end in such a death. Thus acted, it disturbed the wholesome party. So Mr. Pinero re-wrote his last scene,

for their peace, and the lot of his young debauchee was improved from a horrible death to life and happiness with a charming wife, a clean slate and a brand new character. For this is the happy ending dearest to the sanitarian—that known causes should *not* have their known effects; above all, that in fifth Acts any leopards which gain the playgoer's regard should be left rigged out in snowy, curly lamb's-wool, and nice Ethiopians go off at the end as blondes with straight, tow-coloured hair. It all comforts the grand virile fellow we spoke of. It brings out the venial nature, almost the romantic value, of any wild oats he has sown; it pleasantly confirms his favourite domestic pose of the protecting male lion; or, if he be a bachelor, it authorises his slightly Oriental sympathy with Edgar Ravenswood's feeling that—I quote literally—"the softness of a mind, amounting almost to feebleness, rendered Lucy even dearer to him, as a being who had voluntarily clung to him for protection and made him the arbiter of her fate for weal or woe." It helps to make him easy, too, about the nature of unselfishness, as something mostly to be practised on enormous and fantastic scales, in cases of a guaranteed remoteness.

Well, it may all, I fully agree, be most wholesome, in some sense. It is true that Narcissus became at last seriously ill through doting so much on his own pretty face in the fountain. But we will not build too much on that. And I quite think that after the play a man may sleep better who goes to bed thinking how truly a good sort he is after all than one whom some telling picture of a character stingingly kin to himself torments with the fancy that after all he *may* be a miserable sinner, not in the mild poetic sense in which he says he is at church, but really and literally, in the same vivid and burning sense in which he is, say, a ratepayer. It may quite well be better for digestion, especially after that hard day in the city, if the mind be gently laid on board a "helmless bark," and drifted down luxurious streams of vague, rather washy complacency, than if it be pulled up, one short hour after dinner, by the very sight and sound of some big, grim truth that we knew to be true but were trying to keep safely out of our minds, like the irreparableness of all action and the extreme difficulty of squaring God without conduct. "Avoid," Bacon says in his essay on Bodily Health, "subtile and knottie Inquisitions." "To be cheerfully disposed," he adds, "at hours of recreation," is one of the ways to live long. The whole case, no doubt, for the wholesome play, from the point of view of the stomach and liver, is strong. Do not let us ever deny, then, that

some useful work is done by the drama in sparing them any derangement. A gifted small girl, we are told, has explained that pins are a great means of saving life, "by," she went on, "not swallowing them." Plays, too, may save health, by having no significance at all for us to swallow. Distinguished things have often served such modest offices quite well. An epic poem will do to light your pipe with, or curl the hair, as well as any other piece of paper of the same size. The great scholar Warburton's cook, you remember, burnt up, leaf by leaf, the sole existing copies of seven plays of Philip Massinger as cover for pie-crust, and though we may have lost some masterpieces by her choice of paper, let us be fair and admit that the shielding of pie-crust from excessive heat is in itself a legitimate object of human desire. And so, too, the safety of our sanitarians' precious health; and if the theatre pursue it at the cost of only fairly commensurate sacrifices, and with reasonable regard for other possible objects of human desire, well, it is a free country; no one need grumble. "Who sweeps a room as in thy sight," a devout poet says, "Makes it, and the action, clean"; and let us cordially allow that for dramatic art to aid the peristaltic action of the alimentary canals of the weary and heavily laden may also be a pious exercise.

Only, do not let us make this the whole and sole aim of the drama, as people would do who rush out to condemn as unwholesome all plays that impel you to think with a will about anything, or to ask with a genuine wish to be answered, if all can be really so well as you thought with yourself and your world. For one thing, the practice of every great age of the theatre warns us against such exclusions. In the three greatest ages of them all—the Elizabethan prime in England, Molière's time in France, the Periclean period in Greece—you find no self-restriction of playwrights to the "wholesome" view or the peptonised theme. Among the three greatest Greek dramatists of whom we know, the highest achievement of the first, Æschylus, was, like Ibsen's *Ghosts*, a study of a tragic aspect of heredity, a study so particularly disturbing to the susceptible playgoer that we hear of young persons dying of fright at the first performance. Of the second, Sophocles, one of the most beautiful and famous works was what would be now called a problem play, stubbornly argued out, on the question, akin to that which troubles our modern "passive resisters," to what point the private conscience of the individual may or should stand out against the collective conscience of the community as this embodies itself in laws and the decisions of lawful govern-

ments. Of the third, Euripides, one of the most perfect plays, the *Hippolytus*, is in part what would be called by a modern wholesomist critic a disagreeable study in the morbid psychology of an emotional pervert, Phædra; while another, the *Medea*, is, or contains, an elaborate discussion of—as we say now—the "rights of women," the mutual duties of husbands and wives, the comparatively low morality demanded of men by public opinion, the greater weight and tightness of the marriage bond for women, and the cheapness of current masculine sentiment about the facing of death in war as the heroic duty and privilege of man, whereas, as the heroine explains somewhat cuttingly, three battles are less dangerous than one confinement; in fact, the play is everything that is termed unplay-like and unwholesome when some Miss Elizabeth Robins attempts it in London. In Molière's time the ruling mandarins of wholesomism seem to have been the Paris clergy and perhaps the French Academy. Academies are nearly always blankly wholesome; an empty room is easy to keep clean. While Molière, the first of French writers, lived, the Academy did not admit him; the Church procured the prohibition of his greatest play, *Tartuffe*, as being "capable of producing very dangerous consequences"—in short, unwholesome; one of its pastors described him, at the time, as "a man, or rather a demon clothed in the flesh and dressed in the garb of a man," and "the most notorious blasphemer and libertine the world has seen"; and when he died they tried to deny him Christian burial. For the Elizabethan drama, do you think Marlowe's *Edward II.*, were it new now, would be passed by that chief rabbi of the whole hierarchy of wholesomist critics, the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays? And if you do not go to *King Lear* or *Antony and Cleopatra* with your ears well stuffed with cotton-wool, as, I fancy, some of our invalid friends must prudently do, well, you are in for a great piece of experience, but you are not in for a eupeptic evening's peace of mind.

Take it another way: think what the English novel, the chief glory of modern English letters, would be if it, too, had bound itself over, as much of our drama has done, to keep up the quiet of torpid minds at their torpidest seasons. You remember how firmly *A Doll's House* was banned as subversive of this mental order. There, as you know, the man Ibsen's irony got at was made at first much like ourselves, a quite decent, dutiful, family man. And then he collapsed and one's self collapsed with him. One might have been feeling that, while not a saint, one was really a very respectable man of the world, in the right sense, with quite a fair portion, for this earth, of honesty, courage,

unselfishness, comradeship. Then came the plaguey Ibsen showing what tragic messes of baseness could be tumbled into, without much change of manner, by one not readily distinguishable from this object of esteem. To do that very thing, to fix and fascinate your mind, and then perturb it, is the characteristic aim of much of the greatest modern fiction. All who have read Mr. Meredith's studies of selfish sentimentalism or vulgarity of soul must have felt, more or less, as did Stevenson after reading "The Egoist," when he said, "Why, Meredith, you've drawn Sir Willoughby from *me*." So you rise from reading "Romola" with your sense of being not such a bad fellow after all converted into a suspicion that you may be little better than an undetected sneak. The novels of Mr. Hardy, of Zola, of Tolstoy all give an unreflecting optimism its notice to quit. That is not to say that to read them may not be a pleasure. Certainly it is not a pleasure of the same order as an opiate, or a fat-cushioned chair, or a liqueur. It is a pleasure not meant for the sickly; rather the pleasure of walking all day in a north wind on the tops of rough hills where you win the joy of good, rude health through finding out how unfit you set out.

And it is not so with novels alone. All the big new things in all of the arts are upsetting at first, to old habits of mind. The hullabaloo against Wagner was not an exception. Whistler, perhaps the first of modern painters, was quite sincerely conjectured by a British jury, amid public applause, to be little but a swindling mountebank. Swinburne and Rossetti were hooted at for many years by many respectable persons as immoral and unwholesome. Of course a change comes, in due time. "Things," the old physicists said, "move violently *to* their place, but smoothly *in* their place." Wagner is played at the Paris State Opera now; they hang Whistler at Burlington House; we might have had Swinburne in the Abbey. All men, Burke says, are able to be just historically; the hard thing is, to be just, or to be candid, before the trial is past and the case is old history. Looking back now we should all be prepared to have stood up for Shakespeare when Greene was abusing him as a plagiarist, or when playgoers flocked away from his plays and his acting to see those youthful prodigies the Children of the Chapel, or when, as no doubt may have happened, sturdy, clean-minded critics at the Globe would ask for less of Richard Burbage in *Othello* or *Macbeth* and more of hearty, wholesome jigs and bear-baiting. Every one is advanced enough now to say what Philistines the Paris people were who thought the *Misanthrope* a repulsive psychological study when Molière first brought it out.

No one but feels himself, now, the superior of Walpole in taste, of Horace Walpole who, after the first night *She Stoops to Conquer* was played, pooh-poohed it as unwholesomely vulgar and low. But let us be more right than he, if we can, when we do really stand in his shoes and are judging some wholly new play in which some man, whose work does not yet lead the market, is stoutly refusing to write for the theatre just as a place meant for dull or spent minds to bask themselves to coma in that hazy sunshine of complacency. That was what Goldsmith did when he broke the deep peace that had reigned between the Walpoles in the auditorium and the Kellys who then kept the stage in supplies of mushy sentimentalism. In some degree it was what Molière did when in the *Misanthrope* he called on indolent playgoers for a special effort of intelligence, what Shakespeare before him had done when he broke with his time's fixed ideas, and staggered all restful old fogeys, no doubt, with his unclassical irregularities and strangenesses. They were all innovators, troublers of dozing minds ; they would not be wholesome and let well alone. And though, to be Shakespeare or Molière, it does not suffice to innovate and to be called unwholesome by the indolent, still we may be pretty sure that the first-rate man when he comes will be a sad remover of old landmarks and will, throughout his first struggle for acceptance, be often called unwholesome.

The way to be ready to stand by him is not, of course, to force our own likings ; not to try to prefer a new thing because it is new or because other people abuse it. The root of all right judgment in these things is obstinate fidelity to your own personal relish and disrelish—to give yourself to the enjoyment of a thing because you do enjoy it and not because some one whom you think much of enjoys it, or some one else whom you despise does not enjoy it. What matters in criticism is not so much truth as reality, not so much your view's being sound as its being *yours*. To have any critical self of one's own one must keep off the backs of high horses of all kinds, the high horse of culture, the high horse of moralism, the high horses of critical authority and tradition. A horse is a perilous thing for safety. Only don't think these beasts the worst perils. The greatest risk now is lest people who do not know how good their own judgment is, should be browbeaten out of their honest liking for some new, strange play because so few seem to agree with them ; because it is not the fashion ; because it is done, it may be, in a half-empty house, with all the massed makers and vendors of pot-boilers saying it is not the real thing, and all the newspapers that have the largest circulation in the solar system calling it

unwholesome. You see there never was a time when the public opinion of the dull and vulgar well-to-do, who feel safest with bad work, and of the lower kind of dealers, who live by bad work, was so well organised and so vociferous. But if we go to the theatre with minds alive and well, and liking to be well, and caring not one straw for any of these principalities and powers, but simply trusting unashamedly to our own gusto to show what was worth an author's doing, then at least we shall have a chance of feeling, some time or other before we are dead, that at some real turning-point in the history of the English theatre we were on the side that was right then, and that afterwards won.

Some Victorian Chancellors

By W. M. J. Williams

Those who attended the afternoon sittings of the House of Commons when Mr. Goschen was making the annual "financial statement," commonly called the Budget, must be conscious still of the mixed feelings entertained about the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as to whose knowledge of things financial and his general ability there was complete unanimity. Much of this arose no doubt from Mr. Goschen's political history. Had he not been in the Ministries of Mr. Gladstone, particularly the distinguished Cabinet of 1868, and had he not been specially prominent as President of the Poor Law Board, and produced a famous report on Local Taxation! Since those far-receding days, though only eighteen years ago, he had travelled far politically; and now was reckoned one of the "Liberal Unionists" who had severed their connection with Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. But Mr. Goschen had preserved his individuality throughout, and individuality is frequently an isolation. Besides, most of the leaders who seceded from the Liberals had not left elaborate reports behind them bearing upon questions still unsolved. They, too, without exception, still preserved their independence; Mr. Goschen alone, after some characteristic hesitations indeed, had "cut the painter" and consented to hold a portfolio under Lord Salisbury. Every one of the crowded audiences who went to hear Mr. Goschen as Chancellor of the Exchequer, who knew these things, went with a curiosity not arising solely from a desire to have early knowledge of the taxes for the year, but also consciously because he desired to hear, see, and know what Mr. Goschen, the city financier in a Tory Cabinet, and the "trump card" played when Lord Randolph Churchill deserted, would propose to do.

During his occupancy of the Treasury several important things were done, things which remain, and will affect the kingdom for a long time. It was soon discovered that his advent as Chancellor of the Exchequer would involve some important consequences. In a Tory Ministry, he was the

representative of a coalition against Home Rule. Volumes will be required by-and-by to describe the peculiar condition of parties at the time, and how a Churchill was too revolutionary for Lord Salisbury and his colleagues, his substitute being found in a former colleague of Mr. Gladstone; and of a surety Mr. Goschen's addition to Tory resources produced changes of note in the financial quarter. He separated the Local Loans Stock from the corpus of the National Debt; he arranged a very able scheme for the Conversion of the Debt from a 3 to a $2\frac{3}{4}$, and finally, fifteen years after date, to a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. stock, and thereby strengthened the credit of the country to a high degree. In pure finance of that sort his services were most valuable and acknowledged on all hands. When he touched internal matters, which affect the various classes of citizens, he did things which stirred the angriest controversy, things which will remain long the subjects of keenest discussion. Almost immediately on taking office, in collaboration with Mr. Ritchie (afterwards Lord Ritchie of Dundee), who was President of the Local Government Board, he undertook the reform of Local Government in England and Wales, making provision for the changes which the formation of County Councils were made to involve. He was thus brought at once to act respecting matters of which he had written and said much in 1870–72, and particularly were the measures he proposed and passed to aid local funds from national sources a source of dispute which has not ceased yet. During the same interval, also, he was officially responsible for financing those schemes of naval expansion and of military works which involved an infraction of the annual provision which a succession of Chancellors had approved as necessary for the safe and economical expenditure of public funds. As these measures, which in the aggregate involved a large increase in expenditure, were attended by an indifferent condition, and even by a waning condition of trade, there arose a time of the most ardent controversy; and how the political sky was darkened as speech and pamphlet and book appeared to attack or to uphold the measures of the Chancellor said to have become more Tory than the Tories!

Mr. Goschen was "in a tight corner"; for he had been the instrument used to accomplish ends which he had deprecated in 1870. Nor did his predecessor and successor, Sir William Harcourt, fail to rub in the pure salt of criticism at every opportunity, thus affording one of the characteristic and keenly enjoyed sights of the 1886–92 Parliament.

Goschen was ever interesting, and will be so. From the day he left Rugby to the year 1903, when he issued his Life of

his German grandfather, the friend of Goethe and Schiller, he had impressed with his mental capacity all with whom he came in contact. His fame for mental power was well sustained throughout his life. That fame he brought with him when he became Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1887; and that fame it was, in part, which created that interest and expectation in all his Budgets. Indeed, little effort was made in Tory circles to disguise the pleasure with which many of them saw Lord Goschen in Lord Randolph's place. But that fame for mental power reminds us of a less pleasant aspect of this resourceful Chancellor. There were two Goschens, apparently, combined in the same person; and these two so unequally yoked together that there was a perennial dispute kept up, with the lack of comfort inseparable from such a state. There was the Goschen who was distrustful and fastidious, who objected to the extension of the franchise, and who in turn could not contemplate with patience the idea of a self-governing Ireland. That, in short, was a Tory Goschen. There was, equally evident, equally active, if not more so, a Goschen who possessed a penetrating intellect, too active to be content with everything as it was and too prone to analysis not to perceive the defects of some of the colleagues around him. If I refrain from calling this the Liberal Goschen, it is for one reason, because Goschen was never a hearty Liberal. The result of the timidity and distrust combined with a powerful intellect was an apparent indecision, an isolation, and a palpable discomfort whether in the Liberal or Tory camp of his day. Who will not recall the outward signs of this as he stood at the box answering Sir William Harcourt, or making one of his financial statements! A tall man with a great grey head, a pair of weak eyes which made his notes almost worthless, two arms which were always unmanageable portions of his anatomy, a voice thick and croaky, which appeared to trouble him and was calculated to irritate others, he was the very embodiment of a man in conflict with himself. And yet that powerful intellect triumphed over the awkward restless manner, and made his Budgets occasions when everybody of discernment and knowledge desired to hear, if also to forget, the fact that nature had denied Mr. Goschen almost all the marks and attributes of an orator.

This complex character, this powerful but too subtle intellect, that refining to contradiction, were of course characteristic of Mr. Goschen's work as Chancellor of the Exchequer. His work will require study; for its amount was large; it touched some of our greatest concerns, financial and administra-

tive; and its quality in comparison will always be found to be high and strong. There will always be a drawback also; for not only was he treasurer to a coalition bent on a negative policy chiefly, but the best of Goschen's work will always bear the mark of the battles which he fought with himself daily. In the serener atmosphere of the House of Lords, to which he was transferred as a Viscount in 1900, he was probably more at ease; but he could not be comfortable, and to the last, as the Lords found on the tariff question, he had a way of upsetting the crude, the silly, the prejudiced, by the exercise of an analytical mind warranted to make easy-going people very uncomfortable.

Sir William Harcourt's career as financier was a great contrast to that of Goschen. Both became Chancellors of the Exchequer somewhat late in their career; but Sir William Harcourt's occupancy of the Treasury was brief and troubled in two memorable Ministries, while Goschen's tenure was secure and continuous for no less than six annual budgets. Yet it is a matter of opinion whether of the two has left the finer record as national treasurer. There are those who would contend powerfully that Sir William Harcourt accomplished more in his 1892–5 term, uneasy and anxious as was the life of the Gladstone-Rosebery administration of that period, than did Mr. Goschen during the halcyon days of the Salisbury Government of 1886–1892, when he was supported by a firm majority bent on Unionism unyieldingly. Goschen's place in the Tory or Unionist Ministry, from the day when he succeeded Lord Randolph Churchill to the defeat in 1892, was that of an indispensable man, but he always seemed to be uncomfortable. Sir William Harcourt's place in the Liberal Cabinet was secure enough, but it was a place growingly uncomfortable: yet he acted and wrought as a man who had no consciousness of the discomfort at his side. Things, no doubt, were not so serene at close range as they appeared to the onlooker; but spite of that Sir William Harcourt made his tenure of the Treasury a fine record in the financial history of the British Government, and left it a pride of his family for a long time to come.

In mind, in method, in appearance, and in antecedents these two men were a great contrast, which added to the interest of their rivalry during the latest phases of their career. Sir William Harcourt knew little about subtlety, his thoughts were massive, were found on the highways of thought, and were expressed in a John Bull method and tone. Goschen revelled

in fine distinctions, he pursued financial details with a never-failing zest, and so fell into a trap which awaits any cunning manipulation of public finances—the mistrust of mystery. In nothing was the contrast seen more plainly than in the appearance of these men. Both were tall, Sir William Harcourt very tall, and distinguished-looking, and the almond-tree blossomed on their heads. Mr. Goschen, by his awkward gait, his hesitations, and his irritations, revealed or suggested that subtle analytical mind, and the fastidious literary taste for which he was famed. Sir William Harcourt was also distinguished for his historical and constitutional lore, though he was not known in letters as well as Goschen, and he lived really in the gladiatorial combats of the politician. His manner was rugged and aggressive, with the aggressiveness of a kind man, and he brought out his sentences simply, almost ungainly, with an absence of all subtlety of thought, but with that aspect of shrewdness which accompanies humour. Frequently he brought them out with dire confusion to his opponent, and no little satisfaction to himself. Who will forget him as he turned to his supporters for applause, as though he cried "A hit! A hit!" He took politics as a tonic; Mr. Goschen appeared to find everything a plague.

In the House and in the heat of debate Mr. Goschen seemed to regard Sir William Harcourt, as a financier, with scorn. Their antecedents, certainly, were very different. Sir William Harcourt was a barrister and professor of law who had early found his *métier* in the House of Commons. Mr. Goschen was a partner at one time in a financial house in the city, was regarded widely in the city as one of the most erudite of the magnates, and carried himself accordingly, even in his profoundest hesitations. In the House, therefore, for years Mr. Goschen was never so irritated as when Sir William Harcourt was criticising his positions and proposals; and it would not be too much to say that he almost scorned to be attacked from that quarter. But Sir William Harcourt mentally was not unfit to meet Mr. Goschen, and if not a subtle mind it was completely under the dominion of his will, which drove him to heavy labours in the field of politics. And hence his success, the sturdy smashing blows at Goschen's Gothic arrangements in finance, blows made with an accuracy and force all the more sure because he was filially aided in their preparation. Hence, too, as I have said, the great success of Sir William Harcourt at the Treasury, a success which went very far to redeem the failure of the second Home Rule Bill of that administration of 1893, a success which is acknowledged and felt to-day; for a

financial success of that kind becomes a permanent source of strength to the revenue and to the kingdom. Sir William Harcourt's "Death Duty" scheme of 1894 was his "red feather" as Goschen's Conversion of the Debt was his: both have brought great gain to the State and to the people. No sketch of Sir William Harcourt as Chancellor of the Exchequer, a position in which he was proud, would be acceptable without a record of his work on the Bill of 1894. It was his boast, and it remains a great achievement, that he had piloted that Bill through the Commons without resorting to the Closure. And such a Bill! With such a determined and skilled Opposition! Yet Sir William Harcourt, who did not "suffer fools gladly," reached a great height as a parliamentarian, and established his fame as a financier, as he proved himself for so many days and weeks a master of his intricate Bill, a resourceful parliamentary hand, even a conciliatory opponent, and emerged the successful reformer of our inheritance duties, a pioneer in the direct method of taxation, and benefactor to the revenue in days long after his disappearance. It was a curious chance that the author of the increased death duties shortly afterwards succeeded to the Nuneham Courtenay estate, and in a short while died himself, leaving the present Chief Commissioner of Works to pay a double dose of death duties. I can fancy Sir William Harcourt admitting with great good humour what poetic justice had been dealt out to him and to his. However that may be, it must be acknowledged that not a word of complaint has been uttered by his representatives. The revenue from "Death Duties" was found by Sir William Harcourt in 1902 at £8,281,850; in 1908–9 these duties have yielded no less than £18,370,000. In city finance, such as the management of the National Debt, it is not surprising that Mr. Goschen should make his mark: it was equally natural that with his great sympathetic nature Sir William Harcourt should grave his name in history by relieving the poor and by making property owners pay a larger share of taxation.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Bart. (afterwards Viscount St. Aldwyn), succeeded the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer in June 1895. He had occupied the post for a few months in 1885 during the first Salisbury administration, but had not introduced a Budget. Now he was privileged to bring in no less than seven Budgets consecutively—an opportunity which occurs to very few Finance Ministers. Goschen now took the Admiralty in charge, and saw Hicks-Beach entrusted with those duties which, however uncomfortable he felt in discharging

them, he loved as does an expert only. If there was a contrast, strong and significant, between Mr. Goschen and Sir William Harcourt, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was different again, and the difference was decidedly a difference of inferiority. For seven years to come the finances of the country were in the charge of a man of considerable administrative experience, a man of honest mind and purpose, but of a mind which had been formed on grand juries and at quarter sessions in the county of Gloucester, the mind of a man who was first a country squire not too well endowed, and then only a statesman of a stubborn Tory school. Tall, slight, active, "Black Michael" was reputed in coteries to be determined and strong; but his career as Chancellor of the Exchequer alone is sufficient to belie that estimate. He was not strong; his prejudices and leanings made him ready to weaken. He preached a homily on the growth of expenditure every year at Budget time, and yet that expenditure got so "out of hand" in his time, that when he resigned in 1902 he must have been weary of the situation. It is true that the South African War occurred during his term of office, and such a war disorganises finances; but he must bear his share of the responsibility. We deal with the career, and what we find is that he was responsible for the initiation of an expenditure which in 1905, some two and a half years after he resigned, resulted in an expenditure which had involved six hundred and seventy millions in addition to the annual outlay at the close of the Liberal administration in 1895. Years of office, no doubt, try any set of Ministers severely, and it is true that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach maintained his personal position with the public as well as any who held office during the Salisbury-Balfour *régime* from 1895 to late in 1905; but it is also true that as a Finance Minister the reputation of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach did not improve but fell, and fell very seriously. He had accepted office at a time when Sir William Harcourt's measures had, apparently, completely restored the revenue, and surpluses of a large volume were the order of the year for several years. These surpluses were dissipated, however, nor is it easy to put one's finger on the service rendered by the fast-growing expenditure. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was, no doubt, in favour of the various devices by which local taxation, or the owners of property by which taxation is measured, were relieved; but it is vain and irritating to hear homilies on economy and proposals for such unfair expenditure from the same mouth. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach handled the finest revenue ever enjoyed in this country in a weak way; and the

only excuse that can be made is that he had many ravenous maws to satisfy.

At the table Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was a much pleasanter sight than either Mr. Goschen or Sir William Harcourt. Without the distinction of either of his predecessors in mind or general powers, he possessed a reputation for candour and straightforwardness which made the House listen to his financial statements with pleasure. His candour and his freedom from any affectation, added to the simplicity of his statements, making them models of clearness, though they were delivered without the slightest attempt at oratory. He had a tale to tell, and he told it, straightforwardly ; and there was the end of the matter. A more respected personality the House did not contain ; but it must be repeated that as time rolled by he was conscious that his success as a Chancellor of the Exchequer, thanks in part to the war, was represented by a minus. He withdrew from the Cabinet in 1902.

Mr. C. T. Ritchie, who had been at the Local Government Board, and lately at the Home Office, became the next Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was a sort of general servant in Conservative Ministries, and had now a safe seat at Croydon. Safe was his own characteristic as statesman and Minister. Tall, gaunt, unaffected, he was the very embodiment of the city merchant : and stood before the House and addressed it as though he had wares to sell, the merits of which he would enumerate in the prosiest prose. The House trusted this downright, prosy, hard-working man, and this confidence was based on good work done in previous years. Whether at the Local Government Board, or at the Home Office, routine work had been well done, the man of regular business habits was there and efficient ; and his party owed him much. Associated with Mr. Goschen in 1888 in passing the Local Government Act, which founded County Councils, and transformed local government in the shires especially, it is questionable whether he could have done so well had not that experienced financier been at the Treasury, and worked out so cleverly the financial portions of that great measure. Now, he was placed at the Treasury himself : it is impossible that he sought the position ; and truth to tell the position was unenviable, for the extravagance of years and the confusion wrought by the war made the Chancellor of the Exchequer's task anything but easy, pleasant and successful. The war was drawing tediously to a close in 1902, but we know enough to conclude that in the Unionist or Tory Cabinet a conflict was going on which issued in great

changes. In July, Lord Salisbury resigned, and Mr. Balfour became Prime Minister, with no other changes in the Cabinet, say the records. Mr. Chamberlain, who had been Colonial Secretary since 1895, went away to South Africa during 1902, and before he returned, on April 23, 1903, to be accurate, Mr. Ritchie had produced his only Budget. It was, of course, an honest straightforward performance, wholly unexciting, but yet containing elements which later on shattered the Balfour administration. The year before, among the expedients to which he resorted for a war revenue, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had imposed a corn and flour duty to bring in two and a half millions : Mr. Ritchie withdrew this ; and on May 15, at Birmingham, Mr. Chamberlain began the "raging and tearing" propaganda known as "Tariff Reform." The abolition of the corn duty of 1902 and this last movement are causally connected in some obscure way, and both intimately connected with Mr. Chamberlain's visit to South Africa. Mr. Ritchie's Budget was accepted, but the Cabinet was not a happy family afterwards, and in September, along with Mr. Chamberlain, Lord George Hamilton, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and Mr. Elliot, Mr. Ritchie left the Cabinet, and in October the Duke of Devonshire resigned, all, save perhaps Mr. Chamberlain, having failed to get satisfactory assurances about Mr. Balfour's trade policy. It was apparent that tempers and feelings were ruffled, and were hurt ; and it may be concluded that Mr. Ritchie was not sorry to resign the thankless position of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Then the country had a genuine surprise, and perhaps a shock. It is certain that few, if any, had been prepared to see Mr. Austen Chamberlain in the place which so many yet remembered filled by men of the calibre of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Goschen, and Sir William Harcourt. The chief thing said of Mr. Austen Chamberlain was that he was his father's son, and that whatever might become of the national finances, he would be devoted to his father's aims and interests. His Budget statements were the baldest, the most uninteresting heard for generations. The Balfour administration was, amid the cries of the tariff campaign out of doors, tottering to its utter failure, and so far as finance is concerned, Mr. Austen Chamberlain's period will be marked, but not remembered, by such peddling as the differentiation between stripped and other tobacco, and by the significant imposition of an extra 1*s.* a pound on foreign cigarettes. This was a period when Mr. Balfour clung to office with the aid of a group of political decadents, and the financial record was miserable. Mr. Austen Chamberlain is young enough

to earn a noble fame ; but on the whole it is not probable that he will be seen at the Treasury again.

Mr. Balfour resigned in December 1905, and was succeeded by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Asquith becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer. Once again a personality was found in the seat of Pitt and Gladstone. Mr. Asquith, indeed, had occupied only the Home Office during the Gladstone-Rosebery Government of 1892–5, and that tenure of office was, therefore, but a limited experience. But as he entered the Treasury there was no doubt of the capacity of the man, and the personality stirred up interest in his appearance at the table as Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the table one saw a short, firmly knit man, in the very prime of life, face and mien and voice proclaiming his manliness, while the whole gait suggested a becoming degree of confidence in his power to discharge the duty in hand. As to his reputation for speech it was so high that no one doubted that, in comparison with the past two years, say, the House would feel that the annual financial statement would be invested with a dignity of utterance and the stamp of power. The task undertaken by Mr. Asquith was so heavy that only a sense of duty and opportunity would have led any one to assume it. All the maxims about expenditure, clear accounts, and canons of taxation had been disregarded of recent years ; and the country felt that any man who would sit tight on the Treasury chest would do good service. But loose and prodigal finance is a national sin, the marks of which abide when the events which gave it occasion are passing from memory. Mr. Asquith might contrive, might economise and reform, but swollen estimates and a bloated expenditure are stubborn matters. A war's finance remains when war's trumpet has ceased : a National Debt increased by one hundred and thirty millions, and a trade paralysed by uncertainty, capital displaced, and labour concentrated wrongly, were some of the chief evils which Mr. Asquith inherited from his predecessors. The purely financial aspect of matters was, evidently, the most pressing for attention : the city aspect of public finances. Accordingly, we find him addressing himself to the task of serving the State and establishing a new reputation by special attention to the National Debt, which was now back where it was in the early seventies of the last century. It required some stern self-denial to adopt such a policy. What easier in taking the Treasury over from the nerveless and unimaginative control of his predecessor than to appeal to popular imagination by a reduction or abolition of the war taxation ! The policy adopted was a courageous combination of relief to

consumers of tea, sugar, and the interests in exported coal, with a special effort to reduce debt, the last appealing only to those who can measure things on a large scale, to those who perceive the springs of a successful trade. During 1908 Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman died, after rendering a highly valued service to the State in many capacities, culminating in a memorable premiership, and by general consent Mr. Asquith became Prime Minister, and handed the Treasury and the Old Age Pension scheme he had initiated to Mr. Lloyd George. But it will be admitted that before he did that he had succeeded in making for himself an honourable place among successful Chancellors of the Exchequer, had succeeded also in maintaining his reputation as a man of capacity and of strength. Passing by the reductions of taxation, the differentiation between earned and unearned incomes for income-tax purposes, the period placed upon extraordinary Budgets for capital expenditure, and the end put to the practice of ear-marking revenue for local purposes, all important improvements in their degree and place, the tenure of Mr. Asquith will be memorable for the payment of forty-seven millions of National Debt during the first three years of the new administration, and that when trade was suffering from short capital; and for that initiation of the system of Old Age Pensions, themselves a great boon, but more significant still as they are said to be the advance guard of a regiment of proposed reforms touching social life.

The Persian Crisis: Rebirth or Death?

By Professor Edward G. Browne

An ancient nation with a continuous history reaching back for 2500 years, which, repeatedly in the political and continuously in the intellectual sphere, has played a great part in the world, and which has abundantly contributed to the literary, artistic, scientific, and most of all, perhaps, to the spiritual wealth of mankind, is at this moment at the crisis of its fate. For the last century, ever since the present Kájár dynasty (a dynasty not of Persian but of Mongolian extraction) ascended the throne of Cyrus and Darius, her course has been downwards, especially during the last twenty years, and many speculations have been hazarded as to her final disruption, which was generally held to be both imminent and inevitable. It has been the modern fashion to ascribe this decline to the worthlessness of the Persians, but this estimate of the national character is disputed by many of those who have known them well enough to appreciate not only their charms but their virtues, to which some older observers bear a much handsomer testimony. Thus, Sir J. Macdonald depicts them as "a remarkably handsome race of men, brave, hospitable, patient in adversity, affable to strangers, and highly polished in their manners . . . gentle and insinuating in their address, and, as companions, agreeable and entertaining"; while Mr. R. G. Watson, in his admirable "History of Persia from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858," describes them as "utter strangers to the fear that comes of physical nervousness," "patient and easily governed," the poor "frugal and respectful," the rich charitable, parents careful as to the welfare of their children, "all classes owning willing allegiance to their lawful sovereign," and "conducting themselves towards each other with good nature and with the outward forms of respect." And a very recent writer, Mr. Napier Malcolm, the author of an interesting book entitled "Five Years in a Persian Town" (to wit, Yazd, where he was engaged in missionary work), entirely coincides with the present writer in the view that, as shown especially by the fortitude exhibited on many occasions since

1848 by the Bábís, the Persians, when deeply moved, are capable of a passive courage with which they are seldom credited. In short, they are a people who, though often reviled by the superficial observer, acquainted only with officials, courtiers and menials, and devoid of insight into the national life and knowledge of the national speech, not seldom succeed in winning the sincere affection and in many ways the esteem of those who have known them intimately.

The Persians were too clever a people not to perceive the ruin towards which their country, between selfish and tyrannical Shahs, unprincipled and unpatriotic courtiers, and greedy concession-hunters, was rapidly drifting. The "willing allegiance to their lawful sovereign," which Watson correctly described as one of the national characteristics, caused them to endure for long such oppression and misgovernment as would have driven almost any other nation into revolt. Nor would this "willing allegiance" have been broken down by mere oppression and misrule had the Persians been able to console themselves with the belief that their country still held an honourable position amongst the nations, and that its soil was inviolate. But with the era of concessions and loans, which may be said to have begun in 1890 and to have culminated in the fatal Russian loans of 1900 and 1902, this belief could no longer be maintained. "The condition of Persia," to quote the official "Summary of Events for the Year 1906," which will be found on the first page of the very instructive Blue Book on Persia (Cd. 4581) published last May, "had been for some time growing more and more intolerable. The Shah was entirely in the hands of a corrupt ring of courtiers who were living on the spoils of the Government and the country. He had parted with the treasures inherited from his father, and with most of the Imperial and national domain. He had thus been obliged to have recourse to foreign loans, the proceeds of which he had spent in foreign travel, or had lavished on his courtiers. There was a yearly deficit, and the debt of the country was growing daily. There appeared to be no resource but another foreign loan, which, as was known, would be expended in the same way as preceding loans, and it was generally believed that the loan would only be granted under conditions which would practically extinguish the independence of the country."

In these circumstances arose the present national or constitutional movement, which, after a determined struggle, culminated in the granting of the Constitution and the establishment of the National Assembly, or *Majlis*, by the late Muzaffaru'd-Dín Shah on August 5, 1906. Into the details of that struggle it is

impossible to enter here, but, in view of current misapprehensions and misrepresentations, three points must be especially emphasised. First, the demand of the people, supported and guided by their spiritual leaders, the *mullás* and *mujtahids*, was primarily for decent government, equal justice, and the deliverance of the country from foreign financial control, while the demand for a National Assembly and a Constitution to secure those objects came later as something of an afterthought Secondly, the movement in question, though undoubtedly influenced both by the results of the Russo-Japanese War and of the Russian Revolution which succeeded it, was not the first of its kind, but was foreshadowed by many previous efforts in the same direction, and especially by the successful agitation against the Tobacco Monopoly in 1891, in which likewise the people were guided and supported by their spiritual leaders. Thirdly, the initial success of the movement was largely due to the countenance given to it by the British Legation at Teherán, which, in the summer of 1906, afforded sanctuary to no less than 14,000 Persian refugees, to whose orderly conduct and excellent discipline ample testimony is borne by the officials of that Legation.*

The National Assembly met on October 7, 1906, before the provincial elections were completed, and was opened by Muzaffaru'd-Dín Shah in person. A good deal of scepticism was expressed amongst Europeans as to the likelihood of its showing any independent spirit, but these doubts were soon dispelled. "The Delegates at once set to work," says the Blue Book (p. 5), "and it soon became apparent that they did not intend to allow their will to be neglected. Their opposition made it impossible for the Government to accept the financial assistance" (*i.e.*, the proposed first Anglo-Russian loan of £400,000, which was then on the point of being concluded) "offered jointly by Russia and England." The Assembly also "announced its intention of instituting reforms, especially in the finances of the country, and of providing itself the necessary funds for carrying on the Government by founding and endowing a National Bank; but, before taking any steps of this nature, it insisted on having a signed Constitution." This Constitution or Fundamental Law the late Shah Muzaffaru'd-Dín was ultimately, after many difficulties and delays, induced to sign on December 30, 1906, only ten days before his death. In its original form it comprised 51 articles, which were afterwards supplemented by 107 additional articles ratified by Muhammad 'Alí Shah on October 7, 1907. These two documents, together with the Imperial Rescript (*farmán*) of

* Blue Book, p. 4.

August 5, 1906, granting the Constitution, and the Electoral Law of September 9, 1906, represent the principles for which the Persian people have, especially during the past year, suffered and struggled with a unanimity and tenacity of purpose astonishing even to those who knew them best, and believed in them most. "Persia," wrote a keen observer who had enjoyed exceptional opportunities for watching the growth of the movement, "has in those two years (*i.e.*, 1906–7), changed beyond all recognition, and it is amusing to see how even men with a life-long experience of the country, who have only departed a year or two ago, are incapable of understanding the spirit which is abroad in Persia to-day."

The National Assembly sat continuously, without recess, from its convocation in October 1906, until its destruction by the Shah's Cossacks on June 23, 1908. Brief and stormy as was its career, its days were probably the brightest which Persia has ever known. The novelty of representative government in Persia and the inexperience of the Deputies naturally gave rise to some mistakes and errors of judgement, but, as Sir Cecil Spring-Rice testifies (Blue Book, p. 7), "on the whole, order was well maintained, and the proceedings were quiet and dignified," while "full liberty of reporting proceedings and of comment, provided this was not of a libellous character, was accorded to the Press." The development of the Press was, it must be added, one of the most remarkable manifestations of the new spirit; it showed conspicuous merit, and, on the whole (so far as the better and more influential organs were concerned) an excellent tone. The assertion of the *Times*, in a leading article published in its issue of July 2, 1908, that "the free Press in Persia . . . proved to be as mischievous and as dangerous as it has proved to be in other Oriental lands" is, in the writer's judgment, gratuitous and misleading, and must be ascribed less to a careful examination of the facts than to a characteristic lack of sympathy with what it regards as lost causes, and a historic dislike of the term "nationalist," by which, unhappily for the Persian Constitutional party, their other title, *millatí* (which in this connection rather signifies "popular"), had, at an early period of its history, been translated.

From the first the National Assembly, already handicapped by lack of experience and by the desperate financial straits to which the country had been reduced by the immemorial mal-administration and peculation of its rulers and by the foreign loans and concessions with which it had more recently been burdened, had to contend with extraordinary difficutlies. Of

these the chief were the persistent hostility and bad faith of Muhammad 'Alí Shah, and the embarrassments created by the two powerful despotic governments whose frontiers marched with those of Persia, and with whose selfish interests the peaceful developement and regeneration of that country did not accord. Later, indeed, but too late to save the Persian Constitution from the disaster of last summer, Turkey, herself emancipated from a tyranny hardly less odious than that of the Kájárs, was changed from a foe to a sympathetic friend; but, to compensate for this gain, England, which had at first shown herself wholly sympathetic, was, by her understanding with Russia, surely though imperceptibly drawn into a position of apparent indifference, if not of actual opposition, towards the aspirations of the Persian people.

That the Anglo-Russian Agreement, signed on August 31, 1907, should, notwithstanding the reassuring explanations of its objects officially made by the contracting Powers to the Persian Government, have filled the Persians with consternation is not to be wondered at. Russia had long been the chief menace to their national existence, but had hitherto been held in check by England. Was this reconciliation of rivals designed, as alleged, "to assure for ever the independence of Persia," and to "deliver her for ever from the fear of foreign intervention," so that she might "be perfectly free to manage her own affairs in her own way," or was the fate which befell Morocco as a result of the Anglo-French *entente* a warning of the fate which would shortly befall Persia? With consternation was mingled amazement that at a time when the weakness of Russia had been made manifest to all by the Japanese War, England, which had so long contended for supremacy of influence at Teherán, should suddenly, for no obvious reason or advantage, abandon all claim to interest herself in the fate not only of the capital and the northern towns and provinces, but even of Isfahán, Yazd and other cities of Central Persia, and confine her "sphere of influence" to a barren corner in the south-east containing only one town (Kirmán) of any importance.* If, however, as was officially declared, and as the friends of Persia sincerely hoped, there was no thought of a partition of Persia, the criticisms levelled at the Agreement by what may be called the land-grabbing school, who considered that England had got much the worst of the bargain, lost much of their point, though even then it could hardly be denied that

* In this connection it is worth reading the chapter in Captain Lionel James's recently published "Side-tracks and Bridle-paths" entitled "The Opinions of Rahmat Khan, Duffadar" (pp. 57–65).

British commerce and prestige in Persia had sustained a serious blow.

The line of argument adopted by the champions of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, especially represented in the Press of this country by the *Times*, is well known. To them Persia was of little moment, and might be sacrificed without scruple to the exigencies of world-politics and the international situation. Concern for her fate was denounced as "sentimentalism," and such as claimed that she too had rights and deserved consideration were branded as busybodies and meddlers, while the notion that foreign politics should be swayed by abstract considerations of justice or humanity was, implicitly or explicitly, scouted as an exploded delusion. For the same reason the very unsatisfactory condition of affairs in Russia, the innumerable executions, the over-crowded prisons, the appeals of such men as Tolstoy and Kropotkin, the tortures, the courts-martial, the pogroms, and the discreditable disclosures connected with Azeff and other *agents provocateurs* were, as far as possible, ignored, and instead a picture was drawn of a beneficent and well-intentioned monarch regretfully repressing a handful of hare-brained extremists in order the more safely to shepherd a grateful and devoted people along the path of constitutional reform.

But it is with the Anglo-Russian Agreement only as affecting Persia that we are at the moment concerned. Here also a defence, and a more plausible defence—possibly, in the light of recent events, a valid defence—is put forward in quarters more authoritative than the Press. It is said that, but for the Agreement, Russia would certainly have annexed the north of Persia; that England, even had she so desired, could not have prevented this; that the Agreement afforded the best, and, indeed, the only chance of preserving Persia's integrity; and that Russia, genuinely desirous of cultivating England's friendship, was loyally striving to restrain her too-zealous agents from the "forward policy" which had become to them a second nature. This is what all Persia's well-wishers, who had faith in the genuineness of the national revival and the latent capacities of the Persian people, desired to believe, but could not believe in face of constantly accumulating evidence to the contrary. Much of this evidence has already been published, and though the *Times*, forgetful of its own previous admissions, and writing always (as is shown alike by its leaders and by the letters of its St. Petersburg correspondent) with a view to gratifying the Russian Government. saw fit to denounce some of these allegations, which were not made lightly or without due sense of responsibility, as

THE PERSIAN CRISIS: REBIRTH OR DEATH?

"Persian fairy-tales," it is now generally admitted that certain diplomatic, consular, military, and financial agents of Russia in Persia did all in their power to embarrass the Persian Parliament, encourage the Shah in his obstinacy and bad faith, and bring about such confusion and disorder as might afford a pretext for intervention. In fairness it must be admitted that the worst and most notorious of these agents have now been removed, and it is said that those who have replaced them—M. Sablin at Teherán and M. Müller at Tabríz—have, in the face of great opposition from the military and reactionary elements, striven to prevent rather than to provoke intervention. Whether this is so will soon be made clear, and at this critical juncture, when, contrary to our expectations, the Constitutionalists have been allowed to depose their perjured and perfidious Shah (though their advance on Teherán was not made without ominous warnings from the Russian and British Consuls, which, happily, they had the courage to disregard), it seems inexpedient to reiterate the evidence for former misdeeds, or to bring forward fresh evidence of a still more damaging character as to the complicity of certain very highly placed personages in Russia in the violent deeds of Colonel Liakhoff, to which the disorders suffered by Persia during the last thirteen months were directly due. But, even apart from this evidence (which is based on certain apparently authentic Russian documents of so curious a character that one withholds them with regret only in consideration of the new hope brought to Persia by the last few days), certain passages in the Blue Book itself are hard to reconcile with the official theory, maintained both in Parliament and by the *Times*, that "Colonel Liakhoff was not a representative of the Russian Government in any sense whatever," * or with the formal assurance given on July 3 of last year to Sir Arthur Nicholson by M. Isvolsky "that Colonel Liakhoff, in carrying out the Shah's recent measures and assuming military control of Teherán, . . . acted without the orders, knowledge, or approval of the Imperial Government" (Blue Book, p. 138). For when it was suggested to the Russian Government by the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg on November 9 last, that the Russian officers in the Shah's service might be withdrawn in the hopes of thereby breaking down the Shah's obstinate refusal to keep his promises, and convincing him that he could not reckon on Russian support against his people (Blue Book, p. 205), M. Isvolsky's refusal to comply with this admirable suggestion was based on the ground of expediency, not on the ground that the

* *See* especially the *Times* leader on "Russia and the Persian Question" in the issue of November 7, 1908.

officers in question were beyond the control of the Russian Government (p. 212). Since, however, Colonel Liakhoff and his colleagues have for the present entered the service of the new Constitutional Government, it is better to forget as far as may be the lamentable deeds which they accomplished last summer.

Having before our eyes the recent confident prophecies of the *Times* correspondent at Teherán and of a writer in the *Westminster Gazette* who had enjoyed rare opportunities of forming a sound judgment as to the spirit and resolution of the Persian Constitutionalists, and likewise the complete and immediate falsification of those prophecies by the course of events, it would be rash to venture on a similar path, and so to court a similar fate. At the best, the new Persian Parliament will be confronted with difficulties more formidable by far than those which the sister Parliament of Turkey has to face. Yet, if only the moderately benevolent neutrality of Russia and England can be counted on, we believe that the Persians of the new birth—the *Khalq-i-badí*, or New Creation of the Bábí scriptures—have the wisdom, the prudence, and the patriotism, as they undoubtedly have the genius, to raise their unhappy country to a position more worthy of its glorious past.

If Russia's motives and actions have aroused suspicion in the minds of Persia's friends and well-wishers, she has largely her own Press, liberal, official, and reactionary alike, to blame. The *Novoe Vremya* and the *Bourse Gazette* have clamoured for a forward policy "if Russia does not wish the opportunity to be taken advantage of by Turkey" (which is far more vitally concerned than Russia in the fate of A'zarbáyján); the special correspondents of the *Ryech* * and the *Russkaye Slovo* † have confirmed most of the complaints made by the Tabrízís as to what even the *Times* describes as "the tactlessness of General Snarsky in handling a delicate situation"; and M. Hartwig's reactionary views have been set forth at length, apparently with the fullest approval, in certain English papers like the *Standard* and the *Outlook*. Nor has the cold reticence of Sir Edward Grey, or his extreme deference to the susceptibilities of the Russian Government, or his obvious lack of sympathy with the Persian reformers, or the general effect of his policy on the Islamic world, inspired so much hope or confidence in the friends of Persia as the hitherto unsuspected firmness, now revealed by the Blue Book, in his negotiations with the Russian Government (more especially last October, when the despatch of Russian troops

* Of June 3 (16).
† Of May 12 (25) and May 27 (June 9).

into A'zarbáyján was twice prevented by his representations) should, perhaps, have produced. And now, when for the first time since the fatal June 23 of last year, a gleam of light has broken through the clouds which for thirteen months have hung so thickly over the unhappy land of Persia, a little optimism is perhaps permitted to those who have so deeply despaired.

REVIEW

"The Condition of England." By C. F. G. Masterman. (Methuen and Co. 6*s*.)

A TREATISE upon the condition of any people, tranquil, prosperous, and under no stress, must always be a matter of moods. It would be comparatively easy to have written, say, upon the condition of Ireland during the potato famine, or upon the condition of the Netherlands in the days of Alva. But to write about a people mixed in race, united by no common emotions, upheld by no common faith—this is a task calling for impossible qualities if the writer is at all to dogmatise with justness. These impossible qualities Mr. Masterman does not possess: no man could. And so Mr. Masterman wavers from despondency to hope, wavers from hope to caution and ends by saying that he cannot tell where we stand. Mr. Masterman is extremely well equipped for his task. He is, we may assume, qualified by his official position to write about the social life of the upper classes: he represents a constituency of the very poor and he has lived amongst them. He has read a great many—perhaps too many—books; he has taken them seriously—perhaps too seriously. We should be the last to quarrel with Mr. Masterman for taking imaginative literature seriously and it is, at least, one cheering sign of the time which, intellectually speaking, we regard even more gloomily than does Mr. Masterman, that a prominent politician in a "serious book" should quote with so much deference from so many mere novels. That is at least cheering, but for the rest it is a rather gloomy picture with which Mr. Masterman presents us. In one sense Mr. Masterman has made an advance on any former writer upon national characteristics that we can remember. Most of these, writing as they do from a sphere of observation purely literary, or literary and of Society, have treated only of quite a limited sphere of human life. But there is abroad—and it is a very good thing—a spirit of exploration; not a very strong spirit but still a certain motive force. We know so little of the lives of the great people: the lives of the great people are so little represented in literature.

But of late years we have had the minutely photographic Bettesworth book and its sequel, which give us the chance of really studying the vicissitudes and the psychology of the agricultural labourer. We have had Mr. Stephen Reynold's "A Poor Man's House" which, more coloured as it is by the author's personality, is a more vivid study of a class more suspicious, more hardy and more arrogant. We have had Mr. Wells' "Kipps," which illuminated for us the psychology of the shop assistant, and his "Tono Bungay," which gave us so really beautiful a rendering of the psychology of the Servants' Hall. And now we have Mr. Masterman pointing out to us the fact that the immense majority of the English people are manual workers functioning in conditions sad enough—an immense crowd, unvocal, with lives quite colourless, working in circumstances frequently of extreme squalor, with joys that to us would seem no joys, with hopes that to us would seem mere hopelessness. Mr. Masterman has done this very well, but he has done it a little statistically, a little coldly. For ourselves, we wish that, letting go his literary and his social side, he had given us a more emotional, a more keenly analytical picture of the great people. It is when he gives us pictures of the crowd at the Peckham Election that he is at his most valuable. For the psychology of the poor, and more particularly of the London poor, is one of the great mysteries. The feature of the London poor man that most has moved us is his singular, ironic, and fatalistic cheerfulness. It is because he takes so little account of this that Mr. Galsworthy, when he has treated of the lives of the extremely poor, has always seemed to us a misleading guide. His poor are perpetually on the whine: they are perpetually folding their hands: they are perpetually giving up the game. But actually—and it is demonstrable—the poor man very wonderfully keeps on going. He has a fine energy in circumstances where none of those better placed in the world could find heart for energy: he has a fine stoicism and with his motto, "We can't all bloody well have everything," he goes quietly on towards the workhouse or the grave, uttering by the way those Cockney witticisms which are so full of wisdom and which cast such sudden flashes upon life. Some of this psychology Mr. Masterman has caught and rendered, and for this his book is the most valuable. The belabouring of Society has been done too often. Society must necessarily be vapid, aimless and of no account since it has no aims and can have no aim save that of getting through the day. Or again, Mr. Masterman's analysis of the literary life of the day takes too much account of the literature of the immediate present. A despised person, finding his market almost

solely in that same vapid, aimless class, the imaginative writer of to-day pays little attention either to his art or to the means by which he can stir the deeper emotions. If he attempt either of these last he cannot exist for there will be no market for his work. But having run through nearly all the strata of our social conditions, having uttered threats of revolution and gloomy pictures of the mental sterility of his day, Mr. Masterman ends up upon a note of caution and adds a short postcript in which he casts doubt upon all that he has written.

" . . . The wise man will still go softly all his days ; working always for greater economic equality on the one hand, for understanding between estranged peoples on the other ; apprehending always how slight an effort of stupidity or violence could strike a death-blow to twentieth-century civilisation, and elevate the forces of destruction triumphant over the ruins of a world. . . ."

" . . . Optimism and pessimism, in face of any civilisation in a changing world, are equally untrue, equally futile. All human societies mingle selfishness and sacrifice, exultation and weariness, laughter and tears. No one age is especially wicked, especially tired, especially noble. All ages are wicked, tired, noble. Progress is always impossible and always proceeding. Preservation is always hazardous and always attained. Every class is unfit to govern ; and the government of the world continues. Austerities, simplicities, and a common danger breed virtues and devotions which are the parents of prosperity. Prosperity breeds arrogance, extravagance, and class hatreds. Opulence and pride in their turn breed national disasters. And, these disasters engender the austerities and simplicities which start the cycle again anew. . . ."

This is a very proper note for the ending of a book very agreeably and svmpathetically written.

E. R.

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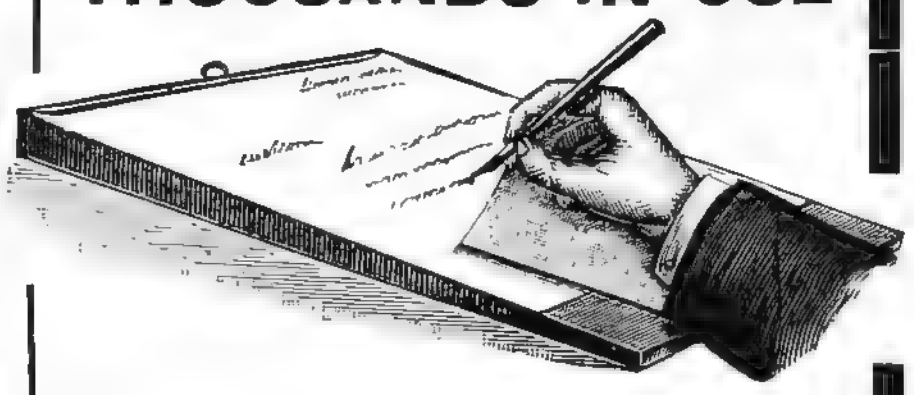

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